

Dover District Council
Local Plan Engagement Strategy

Overview

This document sets out the Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community and key stakeholders at the Regulation 18 stage of the Dover Local Plan.

Consultation – Key Issues for the Local Plan (Regulation 18)

This stage in the process provides an opportunity for local residents and key stakeholders to engage with the Council on the key issues that the Local Plan should address. We are seeking views from the whole community, including residents and community groups, business, landowners, developers as well as statutory consultees, delivery partners and infrastructure providers.

The Draft Dover District Local Plan (Reg 18) will be published for an eight-week period of consultation. Following on from the consultation, officers will review and respond to all representations received, and these will help inform the development of a draft Local Plan.

The consultation to be undertaken is consistent with the approach set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)(2019). It states within the SCI that we will publish consultation documents on-line and the preferred route for comments is via the website, because this helps make the process as efficient as possible. The SCI states the council will also consider using one or more of the following methods:

- Correspondence through letters or email
- Workshops or focus groups
- Presentations at community events
- Joint consultations
- Drop-in events, displays or exhibitions
- Meetings (one to one or group)
- Make plans available on our website and at public inspection points
- Targeted measures for hard to reach groups.

The current strategy is set within the context of Covid-19 and the global pandemic and has been adapted to take into account the current restrictions, whereby no face-to-face consultation events are planned. This is in accordance with government guidelines and there are no statutory requirements at Regulation 18 for hard copies to be placed at public libraries or the Gateway to be viewed. The majority of the consultation will be undertaken using online resources, in order to maintain social distancing rules and ensure the safety of council staff and members of the public. There will still be opportunities for engagement in other formats as well for people without internet access.

Who will be Consulted

An extensive consultation list has been prepared in order to ensure that comments will be sought across a broad spectrum of general consultation bodies, such as community groups, religious organisations, voluntary bodies, schools and businesses within the Dover district.

Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out the 'duty to co-operate'. This requires local planning authorities, county councils and a number of other public bodies to co-operate in relation to strategic cross-boundary matters in the preparation of development plan documents, other local development documents, and marine plans.

The duty relates to strategic matters of sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council.

The duty requires local planning authorities to:

- engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis;
- set planning policies to address such issues; and
- consider joint approaches to evidence collection and plan making

In addition to our East Kent Local Authority neighbours, Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone and Hythe, Thanet and Kent County Council, the duty to co-operate also covers a number of public bodies. These bodies are required to co-operate with Councils on issues of common concern to develop sound local plans. These bodies are currently identified in the Local Planning Regulations and the NPPF as:

- Environment Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
- Natural England
- Mayor of London
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Primary Care Trusts
- Office of Rail & Road
- Transport for London
- Integrated Transport Authorities
- Highways Authorities
- Marine Management Organisation
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Nature Partnerships
- Infrastructure providers
- County Councils

Section 34 (6) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires that where a local planning authority have co-operated with another local planning authority, county council, or a body or person prescribed under section 33A of the Act, the local planning authority's monitoring report must give details of what action they have taken during the period covered by the report. We will continue to update the Annual Monitoring Report to record the requirements under the Duty to Co-operate.

Engagement Strategy

There are a variety of ways in which people and groups can become involved in the preparation of the Local Plan. The minimum requirements for consultation and community engagement are set out in the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (2019). However, it is proposed that the Council is much more proactive in engaging with the local community.

The main host and vehicle for consultation documents and responses will be the Council’s Local Plan website. This will contain a virtual exhibition, for key issues to be reviewed by topic, with interactive maps for the towns and settlements. The Local Plan team will also be working in conjunction with the Communications team prior to and throughout the consultation.

Table 1 sets out a comprehensive engagement strategy for the Local Plan designed to reach out to as many people and groups as possible through a variety of methods.

Table 1: Local Plan Engagement Strategy

Stage in Plan Preparation	Key Issues to be Considered	Methods of Engagement
Regulation 18 – Issues and Options	<p>At the start of the Local Plan preparation process the Council is required to notify specific groups as to the subject of the Local Plan which it intends to prepare and invite them to make representations about what a Local Plan with that subject ought to contain.</p> <p>This consultation will set out the structure of the Plan and overarching themes to be covered by the Local Plan.</p> <p>The plan will cover the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change • New Homes • Employment and the Local Economy • Retail and Town Centres • Transport and Infrastructure • Design • The Natural Environment • The Historic Environment • Development management policies • Site allocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed eight week consultation period 20th January 2020 - 17th March 2020 • Consultation documents will be made available on the Council’s website, which will be the main access point for the consultation with a virtual exhibition and interactive maps outlining the key issues. • A public notice will be printed within the local newspaper. • Letters/emails will be sent informing consultees of consultation dates and how to view and respond to documents. • A press release will be issued advertising the consultation. • Article in DDC Newsletter publication. • Publicise the consultation throughout the consultation period on the Council’s Facebook page and via Twitter and LinkedIn. • Produce a postcard advertising the consultation with dates, website and phone number. (Number of copies for

Stage in Plan Preparation	Key Issues to be Considered	Methods of Engagement
	<p>The purpose of the Regulation 18 consultation will be to ask the local community and key stakeholders whether they agree with the issues and the preferred options set out in the consultation document and if there are any other key issues for the District that should be included in the Local Plan.</p>	<p>dissemination is currently subject to cost calculations).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated phone number will be set up principally for residents without internet access to be able to ask any questions relating to the consultation (comments to the consultation can only be received through written representation, however, by the online consultation page or in exceptional circumstances via, email or letter). • Hardcopy summary documents will be made available at public locations across the District and on request. • Posters advertising the consultation, webpage and phone number will be sent to all parish councils to be displayed and at other key locations within the district. • Online events will be held for members of the public as a replacement for face-to-face drop in sessions, where officers will provide a presentation and questions can be answered. • Stakeholder online events will be held centred around specific issues within the Draft Local Plan and briefings will be held with Parish Councils at the start of the consultation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

How to comment, consideration of comments and feedback

The Council will actively encourage online responses to the consultation and the preferred means of receiving comments is through the interactive online system 'Objective' via the Council's website. Using the online form has a number of advantages, as it is the fastest and most accurate method and allows for the representations to be processed quickly and efficiently. It ensures that representations are attached to the correct section of the consultation document. It also allows respondents to provide

their own summaries to representations, which helps to avoid any risk of misrepresentation of respondent concerns.

The Council however recognises that not everyone is able to use the online consultation system, so paper copies of response forms will also be made available. Guidance notes will also be provided to aid completion of responses.

Petitions received in relation to planning applications and a development plan are an exception to the Council's wider Petition Scheme. Only the person who submits the petition will be recorded as a respondent, we will not be able to add each named signature as respondents to the consultation. We encourage individual representations to be made in response to the consultation in order to fully capture specific issues.

Following the close of the consultation all comments will be reviewed, and we will consider what changes should be made to the draft Plan to address comments received. A consultation statement will be produced to explain how comments have been taken into account, and where it has not been possible to do so, explain why.