Tewkesbury Borough Council

Statement of Community Involvement

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Tewkesbury Borough Council (the Council) will seek the involvement of the community in the planning of the area. All Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required by law[1] to prepare a SCI. This SCI is a statement of the Council's policy for involving interested parties in matters relating to development in their area. The SCI sets out how Tewkesbury will involve the local community, businesses and interest groups in the planning process, in a manner consistent with relevant statutory requirements.

1.2 The 2026 National Planning Policy Framework continues to promote community engagement and participation as a fundamental element of plan-making National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK

1.3 The Council's planning functions can be summarised broadly as follows:

i. Plan-Making and production of guidance;

ii. Assistance with Neighbourhood Plan-Making;

iii. Decision-Making, e.g. determining planning applications; and;

iv. Monitoring / Enforcement of planning permissions.

1.4 'Community' refers to all interested parties that live, work or do business in the area and includes residents, businesses, community and interest groups, neighbourhood planning forums, landowners, developers, adjoining local authorities, government agencies.

1.5 The planning system is plan-led, and any planning application must be determined in line with the Development Plan (Local and Neighbourhood Plans) unless material considerations[2] indicate otherwise.

Reviewing the SCI

1.6 The Council is working jointly with Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council to produce a Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) for their collective areas. The SCI has been reviewed and updated to ensure that it properly reflects the joint working and consultation arrangements that are proposed for the preparation of the SLP. The Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework in August 2026 and it is also necessary to ensure that this SCI incorporates relevant changes to national policy.

[1] Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

[2] The Planning portal gives an indication of what constitutes a material consideration, and it includes the NPPF, and material representations made by local residents and consultees on planning applications.

1.7 As well as setting out the consultation that will take place on the SLP, the SCI also advises on the consultation that the Council will undertake on other planning policy documents such as Neighbourhood Plans (Section 3) and planning applications (Section 4).

Benefits of Consultation

1.8 Greater opportunities for community involvement can benefit communities by:

i. Providing a means for people to express their views, such as on the services that they want and that services are provided in the interests of the community;
ii. Providing an opportunity to influence the decision-making process and shape the future of the area;
iii. Complementing and supporting the strategic planning process and the delivery of infrastructure, development and services across the area;
iv. Providing a greater sense of ownership and accountability for the Council's decision- making;
v. Gaining a better understanding of community needs, improving community cohesion and fostering a sense of inclusion;
vi. Time and money efficiencies through quicker decision-making and speedier implementation of schemes and policies;
vii. Fostering a better understanding of the way that Tewkesbury's services (particularly planning) work;
viii. Increasing input to problem solving and suggestions of new ideas;
ix. Improving participation in services, and;
x. Social value.

Principles for Community Involvement

1.9 The SCI is based on the following principles for Community Involvement. The Council will:

i. Ensure that the purpose of the consultation is clear;
ii. Ensure that consultation will be accessible to the community, through using plain English, wherever possible;
iii. Ensure that the consultation undertaken meets the relevant statutory requirements;
iv. Engage with communities, including hard to reach groups, at the earliest opportunity including using community networks and forums as well as wider online media channels, as appropriate;

v. Ensure that consultation methods are appropriate;

vi. Ensure that consultation is meaningful;

vii. Ensure processes are transparent, accountable and easy to understand;

viii. Be proactive about consultation and use a range of appropriate methods where these will widen the opportunity to contribute.

Involving the Community

1.10 The SCI aims to ensure that all interested members of the community can get involved in the consultation process, whether that be responding to a planning application or commenting on a planning policy consultation.

1.11 In terms of plan-making and the production of guidance, as well as assistance with Neighbourhood plan-making, the Council is required by law to consult certain organisations and bodies.

1.12 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out a list of specific and general consultation bodies, to be involved in the consultation process when preparing Local Plans. Under the Regulations, the Council must consult with specific consultation bodies which they consider have an interest in the subject, and the general consultation bodies which it considers are appropriate.

1.13 General consultation bodies are bodies representing the interests of certain parts of the local community. These bodies fall into a number of groups, as follows:

i. Voluntary bodies;

ii. Racial, ethnic or national groups;

iii. Religious groups;

iv. Disabled persons groups, and;

v. Business groups.

1.14 As well as the 'specific' and 'general' consultation bodies[3], Tewkesbury will also consult "such residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area, from which the local planning authority consider it appropriate to invite representations"[4]. The Council recognises that many members of the community

[3] These are the consultation bodies as defined through The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

[4] Regulation 18(2)(c) of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

are hard to reach or engage with for a variety of reasons. The Council will try to modify traditional consultation methods where appropriate to engage with such groups and individuals. This will include groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and those who are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes.

1.15 A database is maintained, which contains contact details of individuals, groups and other bodies that wish to be kept informed of consultations relating to planning policy documents. People can request that they are added to (or removed from) the consultation database. The database will be administered in compliance with UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation, including appropriate consent and data management practices.

1.16 The Council will make use of different methods of consulting, which may include those listed below. Please note that for all consultations, responses received on social media (Facebook and X, for example), will not be considered as formal representations in relation to consultations.

Consultation Methods	Details
Webpages	Containing links to all consultation documents
Digital engagement methods	May include digital engagement platforms; Online polling / surveying; Webinars/online events; Digital collaboration tools; Map based and spatial tools
Emails or letters	Sent to contacts in database
Surveys and questionnaires	To be completed online or on paper
Public events	Designed for residents and other interested parties
Stakeholder workshops	To inform and to gain feedback from various stakeholders
Member briefing session	Elected members
Press releases	Information provided to media outlets

Social networking sites and online present	e.g. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X
Using existing networks	e.g. Local Nature Partnership

1.17 The level and method of community involvement will be proportionate to the scale, complexity and potential impact of the plan or proposal.

1.18 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order (DMPO) 2015 (as amended) and The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) set out the statutory consultation bodies for different types of planning applications, the minimum consultation periods and the statutory consultation process for consulting on planning applications.

1.19 For Neighbourhood Planning, The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), set out various requirements, including those relating to Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Role of Councillors

1.20 Councillors play an important role in the preparation of and final decision-making on local planning policy, as well as in decision-making such as determining some planning applications. Councillors on the Planning Committee are under a specific duty to determine applications in accordance with the policies of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.21 Furthermore, Councillors have an important role in supporting community engagement in planning matters. They act as a link between local communities and the Council, by helping to promote consultation opportunities, understanding local concerns, and ensuring that community views are communicated and considered as part of plan-making and decision-making processes.

2.0 LOCAL PLANS

Introduction to Local Plans

2.1 As set out in the glossary to the NPPF, Local Plans are “A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community”. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two. Tewkesbury Borough Council is working jointly with Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council, to prepare a Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) for the joint area.

2.2 The Council will maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which, amongst other matters, will specify a timetable for the preparation of any Local Plan. The LDSs of Tewkesbury Borough Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council, have been aligned to reflect the timetable for the SLP. The Council will also keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area. The Council may also keep under review, matters in relation to any neighbouring area to the extent that those matters may be expected to affect the area of the authority.

2.3 The Council will consult beyond statutory consultees where appropriate.

Consultation Requirements

2.4 All consultations on Local Plans will comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) by achieving the following as a minimum:

i. Consultation on issues and options under Regulation 18;
ii. Consultation on the pre-submission version of the SLP under Regulation 19;
iii. Each consultation will have published on the website a statement that sets out any consultation that has already taken place and how comments / representations to the consultation can be made. The statement is for information and is not itself being consulted upon;
iv. All formal consultation periods will be open to comments for a minimum of six weeks;
v. Consultation documents will be made available at the Council office and public libraries through free access to a computer and the internet. Documents can also be provided in other formats and languages upon request;
vi. To enable assistive technologies and avoid digital exclusion, public comments will be accepted through the provided internet portal, in writing and by email, and
vii. The Council will also ensure that the relevant evidence base documents are accessible online.

Regulation 18 Stage

2.5 This stage is primarily intended to be an open discussion of the issues and options that relate to the topic. This stage provides an opportunity to influence the direction of the Plan at an early point in the plan making process. The discussions should reflect that freedom. A range of approaches can be appropriate at this stage, in order to be able to explore the issues in detail. There can be more than one phase of consultation and engagement at this stage.

2.6 The issues and options consultation (Spatial Options and Key Policy Areas), under Regulation 18, took place from 16th January until 13th March 2024. Information on that consultation can be found on the SLP website[5].

2.7 Following the initial consultation with residents and businesses that took place in 2024, the SLP authorities undertook further engagement on the SLP through its website / consultation portal in, 2025 and 2026. This focused on spatial options topic papers and specific evidence studies.

Regulation 19 Stage – Proposed Submission

2.8 The Regulation 19 version of the local plan is sometimes referred to as the "pre-submission" version of the plan. This is the last stage at which there is an opportunity for people and organisations to make representations on the local plan. This version of the plan will be submitted for Examination in Public (EiP) alongside the representations that have been made to it and may include modifications considered necessary. The EiP will be presided over by an independent planning inspector who will determine whether the SLP meets the tests of soundness and legal requirements, having regard to a variety of matters including national policy and the representations that have been made.

Examination Stage

2.9 When the SLP is submitted to the Secretary of State[6] for examination, the authorities will submit a 'statement of consultation' that will summarise the main issues raised through representations. There may need to be further formal consultation carried out during the examination stage, on potential modifications to the Plan. This is at the discretion of the planning inspector[7].

3.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Introduction to Neighbourhood Plans

3.1 Neighbourhood Plans are produced by Qualifying Bodies (QB)[8], rather than Tewkesbury Borough Council. The QB and the Council follow various requirements,

[5] » Consultations & Engagement

[6] The Secretary of State will appoint a planning inspector.

[7] The Planning Inspectorate produce a 'Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations', which is described as a *"Guide aimed at all those involved in the process and concerned with the procedural aspects of examining a local plan"*

[8] Section 38A (12) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) sets out that a

including those within The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), to progress a Neighbourhood Plan. The QB follow various requirements to progress a Neighbourhood Plan and must carry out their own consultation before they submit it to Tewkesbury. The Council must then publicise the document and invite representations before sending it to independent examination.

3.2 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (as amended) sets out that the SCI is required to set out the Council's policies for giving advice or assistance to the QB in preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Development Order. The table below sets out the support that the Council will provide in terms of neighbourhood planning.

Neighbourhood Planning Stage	**Responsibility**	**Tewkesbury Borough Council Support**
Deciding to prepare a neighbourhood plan or development order	Parish Councils or Designated Neighbourhood Forum in non-parished areas (Qualifying Body	We will discuss your ideas for doing a neighbourhood plan to establish if a plan is suitable for your community. We will outline some initial aspects to help you consider whether to proceed. If you are in a non-parished area, we will tell you how to apply to be a Designated Neighbourhood Forum.
Designating the Neighbourhood Area	Qualifying Body	We will review the application and make the necessary arrangements to designate the neighbourhood area. Where necessary, the Council will undertake a consultation on the proposed area.
Preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan	Qualifying Body	
Public consultation on a draft	Qualifying Body Responsible for the	We will review the plan for environmental assessment

"'qualifying body' means a parish council, or an organisation or body designated as a neighbourhood forum, authorised for the purposes of a neighbourhood development plan to act in relation to a neighbourhood area…"

Neighbourhood Development Plan (Regulation 14)	consultation arrangements on the draft plan and for bringing it to the attention of people who live, work or run a business in the designated neighbourhood area.	requirements and other legislation including whether the NDP is likely to meet the legal requirements, i.e. the basic conditions, which include whether the NDP is in general conformity with the adopted Development Plan.
Submission of the draft neighbourhood plan to the local authority (Regulation 16)	Qualifying Body submits the plan. Tewkesbury Borough Council responsible for next steps	We will make the arrangements to publicise (consult on) the plan for a minimum of 6 weeks and will, in conjunction with the Qualifying Body, appoint the independent examiner.
Examination of the Neighbourhood Plan	Tewkesbury Borough Council / Examiner	We will make any necessary arrangements for the holding of the examination. On receipt of the examiner's report, we will work with the Qualifying Body to incorporate any recommended changes to the plan
Referendum	Tewkesbury Borough Council	Responsible for arranging and holding the referendum
Neighbourhood Plan formally 'Made'	Tewkesbury Borough Council	We will hold a Council meeting, providing more than 50% of those taking part in the referendum vote in favour of the plan being made part of the Development Plan, for the Neighbourhood Plan to be formally made provided none of the legislative exceptions apply. We will publish details of the plan and notify the Qualifying Body, and anyone known to have an interest in it

Consultation Requirements

3.3 With regard to the post submission stage of a Neighbourhood Plan, as long as the QB satisfies various requirements then the Council will publicise the plan proposal. The Council will comply with the following as a minimum:

i. There will be one formal consultation period, known as 'Regulation 16'[9];
ii. The consultation period will be open to comments for a minimum of six weeks;
iii. To enable assistive technologies and avoid digital exclusion, public comments will be accepted through the provided internet portal, in writing and by email; and
iv. Consultation documents will be made available at relevant Councils' offices and public libraries through free access to a computer and the internet.

4.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND RELATED APPLICATIONS

Introduction to Planning Applications and related applications

4.1 Every year the Council processes a large number of planning applications and associated consents. The nature and scale of these applications vary from householder and minor applications to large scale major applications for residential, employment and retail developments. The nature, scale and type of application will determine the level of consultation and community engagement undertaken.

4.2 The Council will involve the community in planning applications in a proportionate and transparent way and meet all statutory publicity requirements within the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Procedures for planning applications that are related to Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas are covered by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4.3 Planning applications will be publicised through the Council's website and, depending on the type and location of development, may also include site notices, press notices and when required, neighbour notification letters. A minimum 21-day period will normally be provided for comments. The extent of consultation will vary according to the scale and nature of the proposal. The Council will primarily use site notices as the default method of publicity. Major or sensitive applications will typically involve wider publicity, and applicants are strongly encouraged to undertake structured, pre-application engagement, including community consultation.

4.4 All representations received will be taken into account in the decision-making process where they raise material planning considerations. These will be summarised

[9] As per The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

in reports with the full representations published online. Decisions will be published on the Council's website. If the decision is to be made at Planning Committee, contributors are given the opportunity to attend and speak at Planning Committee, in accordance with its public speaking scheme for Planning Committees.

4.5 Where applications are amended, the Council will consider whether re-consultation is necessary. The Council will keep its approach under review to ensure consultation remains effective and proportionate.

4.6 The Council is guided by the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Procedures for planning applications that are related to Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas are covered by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4.7 The Council will also seek to consult an appropriate range of statutory and non-statutory consultees. These could include organisations such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, National Highways, the County Council and Severn Trent Water. Officers will also use their professional judgement and consult an appropriate range of non-statutory consultees.

4.8 The Council aims to encourage discussions to take place before any major application is submitted in order to try and achieve a degree of consensus and/or at least a clearer understanding of what the proposal is trying to achieve. The Council has a pre-application service to provide applicants with guidance prior to the submission of an application. There is a reasonable charge for this service and full details can be found on the Council's website Planning enquiries - Tewkesbury Borough Council

4.9 Table 5 below, sets out the Council's publicity methods for each development category. The methods listed, represent a toolkit and the Council will apply them proportionately, depending on the scale and complexity of the proposal, whilst ensuring adherence to statutory requirements.

Table 5: Publicity for Planning Applications

Type of	Statutory Publicity Requirements	TBC Publicity
EIA Screening	None	None
Application accompanied by environmental statement	Press Notice and Site Notice (as EIA Dev)	Press Notice and Site Notice
Departure from the Development Plan	Press Notice and Site Notice	Press Notice and Site Notice
Affecting Public Right of Way	Press Notice and Site Notice	Press Notice and Site Notice
Major Development	Press Notice and (Site Notice or Neighbour letters)	Press Notice Site Notice
Minor Development	Site Notice or Neighbour letters	Site Notice

1-9 dwellings, less than 1,000 sqm non-residential, change of use		
Householder Development	Site Notice or Neighbour letters	Site Notice
Affecting setting of a Listed Building	Press Notice and Site Notice	Press Notice and Site Notice
Affecting character or appearance of a Conservation Area	Press Notice and Site Notice (for physical works) judgement on whether change of use requires publicity	Press Notice and Site Notice for physical works only.
Change of Use	Site Notice or Neighbour letters	Site Notice
Change of use to a hot food take away	Site Notice or Neighbour letters	Site Notice
Adverts (listed building consent for advert will have LBC publicity)	None	Site Notice in Conservation Area Judgement elsewhere based on significant amenity
Permitted development requiring prior notification to Local Planning Authority	Only by applicant as per requirements in General Permitted Development Order	Site Notice as per requirements in General Permitted Development Order
Telecommunication Masts more than 20mPrior approval Part 16 masts up to 30m or full planning applications	Site Notice or Neighbour letters to those adjoining the site	Site Notice
Applications for works to a TPO tree	Discretionary Site Notice	**
Variation or Discharge of Conditions	None	Variation of condition – Site Notice
Variation or Discharge of Conditions on Listed Building Consents	None	Variation of condition – Site Notice
Listed Building Consent	Press Notice and Site Notice Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings	Press Notice and Site Notice Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings
Demolition in a Conservation Area	Press Notice and Site Notice	Press Notice and Site Notice
Reserved matters	None	Site Notice only No press notice required.
Amended plans	None	For significant changes, i.e. there would be a material change in the impact on neighbouring properties - New Site notice.
Non-material minor amendment	None	None
Lawful Development Certificates	None	None

Permission in Principle	Site notice	Site notice
Technical Details Consent	Site notice	Site notice
Larger home extension covered by the category above on PD prior notification	Neighbour Letters only requirement as per Class A, A.4 (5)	Neighbour letters

** In relation to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) applications, the display of site notices is discretionary. The Council may display notices on or adjoining the site, and/or notify adjoining owners or occupiers, where considered appropriate. Consultation arrangements will reflect the circumstances of each case and will accord with the relevant legislation and applicable guidance.