



# **Wigan Statement of Community Involvement**

**November 2015**

Effective from 9 November 2015



# ONE

## Introduction

**1.1** This Statement of Community Involvement sets out how we will consult and involve people in the preparation of our local plans and in the planning application process. It sets out who, how and when we will involve people in these activities. It has been kept short deliberately to ensure that as many people as possible will read it.

### **Our guiding principles**

**1.2** Our approach to community involvement in the preparation of our local plans is in line with the advice of Government in the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 155 states: “Early and meaningful collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made.”

**1.3** Our approach to community involvement in the planning application process is also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraphs 188 and 189 advocate “early engagement” with the council and with “other parties” and the “local community”.

**1.4** Our approach with neighbouring and other local councils is also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 178 states that public bodies have a “duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries” with particular reference to “strategic priorities”. Paragraph 179 further enables local planning authorities to “work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas”. This is of particular relevance for Wigan Borough within Greater Manchester, but also with cross boundary issues with our neighbours in Lancashire, Merseyside and Warrington.

## TWO

## Local Plans

**2.1** We prepare Local Plans to set out our policies for sustainable development to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. They must be based on up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area and be consistent with the principles and policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

**2.2** Consultation is required at various stages in their preparation, including the 'Proposed Submission' stage, after which they are submitted to the Government. An independent Planning Inspector then carries out a public examination of the plan, to consider the views of interested people and to assess whether it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. If it is, the inspector will recommend that the council adopts the plan. If it needs to be modified to a reasonable extent, the inspector will recommend that the council adopts the plan after having made those modifications.

**2.3** Our approach to involvement is set out below. References to 'we' mean the council, or the council in partnership with other councils and/or authorities, such as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), when the plan area is across district boundaries. For plans produced with the GMCA, references to 'the borough' should be replaced directly with references to 'Greater Manchester' and references to 'our website' should also include the GMCA's website and other council websites within Greater Manchester.

### Who will we involve?

- **Specific consultation bodies** – these are organisations specified by law for consultation as appropriate, including those responsible for services, utilities and infrastructure provision, Parish Councils in and adjacent to the borough, adjoining councils and Government departments.
- **General consultation bodies** - these are community and voluntary bodies with an interest in the borough and bodies that represent different racial, ethnic, national or religious groups, disabled persons or persons carrying on business in the borough.

- **Elected representatives** - this includes local councillors, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament.
- **The general public** - this includes people who live in, work in or visit the borough or have another interest in the borough.
- **Businesses** – those with business interests in the borough.
- **Landowners, developers and agents** – those who have a direct interest in future development and have a major role to play in providing the facilities and services the borough needs.
- **Duty to co-operate prescribed bodies** - these include neighbouring councils and other prescribed bodies as set out in law, many of whom are also specific consultation bodies.

### When will we involve you?

- At **commencement**, asking what the plan should contain and engaging with relevant bodies to identify the issues and the evidence needed.
- During **preparation**, as appropriate, when we are gathering evidence, confirming the issues, developing the options for addressing the issues and then the preferred options/approaches, specifically inviting comments on a draft document during a specified time period and considering them prior to the next stage.
- At the **publication** stage, when we publish the proposed submission version of the plan - the draft plan we want to adopt - for formal representations during at least a six weeks period on the soundness of the plan or whether it complies with legal requirements. Significantly, only representations made at this stage can be considered at the public examination.
- From **submission**, when we submit the plan to the Government, having made any small-scale changes to it in response to comments made at the previous stage, following which an independent inspector will be appointed to undertake a **public examination**. People who have made representations at the previous stage can appear at the examination.

### How will we involve you?

- We will contact appropriate organisations and individuals directly by email, or by post when it is the only means available.

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- We will publicise consultations by methods such as our website and other websites as appropriate, press releases, local newspapers and radio, social media, site notices, meetings, workshops and ‘drop-in’ sessions.
  - We will make consultation documents available on our website; on other websites if appropriate; at Wigan Library, which is part of the Wigan Life Centre, The Wiend, Wigan, our principal office for visiting members of public; and at other public libraries.
  - We will publish comments received, or a summary of them, as soon as possible and explain how they have been taken into account in preparing the plan. <sup>(1)</sup>

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1 The exceptions to this general principle occur at the ‘publication’ stage of the plan, after which representations are passed to the independent inspector to consider at the public examination, and following the examination when the inspector recommends proposed modifications to the plan which need to be consulted upon. At these stages we are not in a position to explain how comments have been taken into account.

## THREE

# Supplementary Planning Documents

**3.1** We prepare Supplementary Planning Documents to give more detailed advice and guidance on how to meet policies in the Local Plan, for example on design or requirements for affordable housing. They will be a material consideration for relevant planning decisions but are not part of the local development plan.

**3.2** Our approach to involving people in preparing Supplementary Planning Documents is similar to preparing Local Plans but with two main differences to **Who?** and **When?**

### **Who?**

- There are no specific consultation bodies that we are obliged to consult, as there are with Local Plans. Instead our consultation on these documents will be focused on those bodies and individuals with an interest in the particular subject, although comments will always be welcomed from others.

### **When?**

- Consultation must be carried out during preparation of a supplementary planning document prior to its adoption but, other than that, there are no specified stages. We will always carry out at least one stage of public consultation before we adopt such a document, including producing a draft document.

## FOUR

# Planning Applications

**4.1** Planning permission is generally required for new development and changes of use or appearance of land or buildings. The council believes that community engagement on planning applications brings benefits to the process by enabling the community to understand proposals and express their views on them or suggest changes which would improve them.

**4.2** Our approach to involvement is set out below.

### Who will we involve?

- Where neighbour notification is required, adjoining occupiers, being those in properties which have a common boundary with the application site.
- Additional properties depending on the scale, nature, and likely impact of the proposal.
- Statutory and non-statutory bodies, such as the Environment Agency, as appropriate.

### When will we involve you?

- **Pre-application** – Most development proposals benefit from engagement with the local community early in the process and we encourage applicants to undertake community involvement exercises using a variety of techniques.
- **Application** – We will publicise the proposal and notify neighbours and other interested parties as indicated above to request their views and consider these before making a decision.
- **Where amendments are made which significantly alter the nature or impact of the proposal** – We will carry out further consultations as appropriate and again consider the views received before making a decision.
- **Post-decision** – Copies of decision notices are posted on our website. When decisions are appealed we will notify those who made representations on the application and advise them of the need to make any further comments directly to the Planning Inspectorate.



## How will we involve you?

1. Where required, we will contact adjoining occupiers directly by post.
2. Statutory and non-statutory bodies will be notified by email.
3. We will publicise some applications by site notices or local newspaper advertisements when this is a statutory requirement.
4. Details of new applications are added to our website and a weekly list of applications is also posted on the website and emailed to local councillors.
5. A period of 21 days from notification is normally specified for the receipt of representations (14 days in press notices).
6. All representations will be taken into account and summarised in the officer's report when making decisions on applications, including those decided by Planning Committee.
7. We will inform those who have made representations on an application if it is to be considered by Planning Committee.
8. Members of the public are allowed to address Planning Committee either in support of or in opposition to an application, within prescribed time limits.

## FIVE

### How to contact us

For all matters relating to the Local Plan, contact **Planning Policy and Projects:**

By email to [planningpolicy@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@wigan.gov.uk)

By telephone: 01942 489249

By post to Planning Policy and Projects Team

Places Directorate

Wigan Council

PO Box 100

Wigan WN1 3DS.

For all matters relating to planning applications and other applications, contact **Development Management:**

By email to: [planningrepresentations@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:planningrepresentations@wigan.gov.uk)

By telephone: 01942 489144

By post to: Development Management

Places Directorate

Wigan Council

PO Box 100

Wigan WN1 3DS