

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation – Summary of Responses

January 2020

165 responses

Type	Number
Agents	11
Business owners	5
Community groups	6
Statutory consultees	6
Organisations	10
Town / Parish Councils	32
Residents	95
Total	165

Q1. Do you agree or disagree with the content in the Statement of Community Involvement?

146 responses

Strongly agree / agree	45%	5 x agents; 1 x business owner; 2 x community group; 4 x organisations; 9 x parish/town councils; 43 x residents; 2 x statutory consultees
Neither agree or disagree	33%	2 x agents; 4 x business owners; 1 x community group; 4 organisations; 4 x parish councils; 33 x residents
Strongly disagree / disagree	22%	1 x agent; 1 community group; 1 organisation; 16 parish councils; 12 residents; 1 x statutory consultee

General comments

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Document is clear and its aims worthy.	Support welcome.
Document seems balanced and appropriate.	Support welcome.
Document seems comprehensive.	Support welcome.
Document needs to be more detailed – to provide additional clarity about how and when organisations or individuals will be consulted.	The Council does not want to include too much detail in the document in order to make it shorter and more accessible, and to allow flexibility during the current transition period that the Council is going through.
Important that residents are aware of what is happening in their area.	Officers within the Planning Service will work with colleagues in the Communications Team to ensure that key planning matters are publicised as widely as possible.
Consultations must be seen as meaningful and not a rubber stamping exercise.	Agree.
It's a standard statement, the implementation is the key.	Noted.
Difficult document for ordinary residents to absorb.	Comments noted. The Council will consider what amendments, if any, can be made to make the document more accessible to the public. However, given the complex nature of planning it can be difficult to avoid reference to certain terminology given the extent and depth of the legislation relating to planning.
Not plain English – give it to an 'ordinary' person to read beforehand.	Ditto.
Far too often in the past the views of residents and the Parish Council have not been taken seriously.	Comments noted. Dorset Council is committed to listening to the views of residents and Town/Parish Councils.
Not enough thought given to those who have no online access, have mobility or other disabilities or severe illnesses that	Many essential facilities such as banking and other central government services are being

<p>prevent any access to documents.</p>	<p>provided online. This is because it is cheaper and for many people a more convenient way to do business. Therefore, Dorset Council is encouraging households to get connected to the internet (www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/superfast) so that residents can more easily access information and services. Nevertheless, the Council acknowledges that some members of the community have limited or no online access. As set out in the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) paper copies of consultation documents will be made available at the most appropriate Dorset Council office serving the local community.</p>
<p>The SCI should encompass all new Dorset Council Plans (e.g. Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Local Plan).</p>	<p>The SCI is a specific legal requirement of the Planning Service. In particular, the Local Plan has very specific processes that it has to follow, which other plans (such as the SEP and LTP) do not have to follow. We understand the suggestion for more joined up working practices, but in the interest of keeping the SCI short and fit for purpose, it is felt that adding reference to other non-planning documents would add unnecessary complexity.</p>
<p>Include reference to the development of a new Local Transport Plan for Dorset and a commitment to involve the North Dorset community at the earliest opportunity in its development.</p>	<p>Ditto.</p>
<p>Document concentrates on the planning process rather than how a Local Plan will be formulated.</p>	<p>The requirements of an SCI are set out in Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SCI should explain how people and organisations will be involved in the exercise of the authority's planning functions. There is a section of the document that considers the Local Plan production process.</p>

<p>Document makes no reference to the Duty to Co-operate and the requirement to actively engage the community on cross-boundary issues.</p>	<p>The duty to cooperate is a requirement for planning authorities to cooperate with each other and other prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries (see National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 24–27). As such it does not extend to the wider community, and there is no requirement to include it in the SCI.</p>
<p>No mention of engaging harder to reach groups nor any specific plans and strategies to achieve the aim of wider participation.</p>	<p>It is stated on the first page that the Council will aim to engage with and involve people regardless of their race, ethnicity, faith, belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Furthermore, the draft Equalities Impact Assessment details that the adoption of the SCI will have a positive or neutral impact in respect of the protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010.</p>
<p>The statement should be created by the inclusion of stakeholders so that it is owned by the communities of Dorset rather than given to them.</p>	<p>It is a legal requirement that an SCI is in place, hence it has been necessary to produce one quickly for the new Dorset Council. We have undertaken a 6 week consultation on a draft version of the SCI in order to get the views of stakeholders.</p>
<p>A section on “How this will affect you” would be helpful, with subsections for residents, land/property owners, businesses, community groups and agents.</p>	<p>It is unclear what additional information could be provided. The comment appears to relate to how the document is structured rather than what it covers. The Council considers the structure proposed is appropriate.</p>
<p>Prepared to make allowances during transition to a unitary authority but expect the service to improve in the future.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Include an appropriate link to be able to register our intention to be involved with the consultation process</p>	<p>The SCI provides contact details for the Planning Policy Team to enable anyone to register to be included on the Council’s local plan mailing list.</p>

<p>You should assume that everyone wants to be kept informed as a matter of course rather than assuming no one does unless they sign up.</p>	<p>We do not have the resources to write to every household. The most cost effective way to contact people directly is via email, hence we ask people to add themselves to our mailing list. The Dorset Council News Magazine, which will be distributed to all households in the Dorset Council area, will feature key planning matters.</p>
<p>Include specific provision for consultation on a single Community Infrastructure Levy for Dorset.</p>	<p>There is no requirement for the SCI to cover CIL production. Notwithstanding this, any future proposals relating to a single Community Infrastructure Ley (CIL) Charging Schedule for Dorset will be subject to consultation.</p>
<p>Should be reference to maintaining an agents and developers forum, as a means of engaging directly with the development community. This would provide an opportunity to engage developers in the emerging evidence base and local plan preparation as well as on procedural matters concerning development management.</p>	<p>Dorset Council will consider the potential of running a forum. However, it is considered that there is no need to make explicit reference to this in the SCI.</p>
<p>Would like to see how DC will engage with its own departments in preparing the Plan and in handling major planning applications.</p>	<p>Interaction between Council departments is an internal matter and therefore outside the scope of the Statement of Community Involvement.</p>
<p>Inclusion – would like online streaming of all meetings, and any displays in halls should be put online and into a free magazine delivered to every home. Surveys should be put online and not just done on the street.</p>	<p>The Council has previously put copies of public exhibition boards online, and has also put surveys online. The Council will consider the potential of streaming all meetings online. Some meetings have previously been streamed online.</p>
<p>As a central authority you need to advertise yourselves or risk becoming remote and losing support.</p>	<p>Point noted. The Council has a Communications Team that assists with publicising the work of the Council and the services it provides.</p>

Consultation should be inclusive and shaped by stakeholders – particularly important given the undue influence of developers.	Point noted. The Council aims to ensure that consultation is inclusive and that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account.
Would like to see something about capturing the ideas of and communicating with residents and community.	This will hopefully be done through the processes set out in the SCI.
Throughout the document say “parish and town council” rather than “parish council.	Change reference on page 2 from “parish councils” to “town and parish councils in Dorset”.

Page 1

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Table heading ‘Duty’ – change to ‘What we do’ – as not all the points listed are duties.	Agree. Change heading ‘Duty’ to ‘What we do’.
‘Producing local plans’ – change to ‘Producing a development plan (e.g. local plans) – table needs to be clear what forms the development plan and what is an SPD.	The Government prefer to use the term ‘local plan’ in reference to ‘development plan documents’ – see The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework. To ensure consistency with government policy the Council will continue to use the term ‘local plan’.
‘Monitoring and evidence base work’ – The criteria and guidelines for gathering evidence need to be subject to public consultation and scrutiny.	Evidence base work should be strictly factual and therefore there is limited scope for public consultation. It can be scrutinised when it is used to support proposed planning documents during the consultation periods.
‘Making decisions on planning applications’ – In addition to consideration of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans etc. it should add “and other material planning considerations that may arise.”	The Council has amended this part of the SCI so that the focus is on ‘Processing and deciding planning applications’ rather than ‘Making decisions on planning applications’.
2 nd bullet point – make all of ‘engage with and involve people’ bold.	Agree. Change made.
5 th bullet point – does alternative formats	Amendment made to Draft SCI to

include languages?	refer to making documents available in other languages where possible.
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Page 2 and 3 – Planning Policy

Who we will consult

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Consult Nuclear Decommissioning Authority	Will add to the Council's consultation database.
Include the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in the organisations listed in this section.	References to Dorset LNP and Dorset LEP added to this section.
Include Public Heath Dorset in the organisations listed in this section.	Update made to include Public Health Dorset in the list.
Should consult Neighbourhood Planning Groups – and take care not to overwrite up-to-date neighbourhood plan policies.	Neighbourhood planning groups can request to be added to the Council's mailing list. Otherwise, it is assumed that they will be notified by the town/parish council that they are working on behalf of.
Would like organisations such as the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and civic societies to be named as consultees.	These organisations fall within the group of voluntary bodies whose activities benefit the area.
No reference to environmentally focused organisations such as Dorset Wildlife Trust or the Woodland Trust.	These organisations fall within the group of voluntary bodies whose activities benefit the area.
Would like clarification re what constitutes a 'voluntary body'. Does it include residents associations?	Dorset Council considers that residents associations are normally voluntary bodies.
Parish councillors usually have wide knowledge of their locality – therefore ask for confirmation that Parish Councils do have a clear role in the formation of Local Plans.	Parish Councils will be consulted on Local Plans as they are progressed. Dorset Council appreciates the local knowledge that parish councillors have and wants to work with Parish Councils on Local Plans that are produced.
Change paragraph that starts "General consultation bodies aim to capture..." to "We	Section amended.

will consult with general consultation bodies to ensure we capture the views of a broad range of local groups that represent different interests in the area”.

Include parents groups and school governing bodies as a way to include families in the consultation process.

These groups have not typically engaged in Local Plan consultations in the past. However, such groups are welcome to request to be included on the Council’s mailing list.

When we will consult / Local Plan Production Process

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Four to six weeks is insufficient for effective public consultation	Amendment made to remove reference to four weeks in the table on page 4 of the SCI. However, a footnote does set out that in exceptional circumstances public consultation on a SPD may last for only four weeks.
Consultation should be at least 6 weeks.	Comment noted. This is the legal minimum for consulting on a publication version of a local plan. With regards to SPDs consultation periods will normally last for at least 6 weeks. However, a footnote does set out that in exceptional circumstances public consultation on a SPD may last for only four weeks.
Consultation should be at least 8 weeks.	Comment noted. The Council will consider the appropriate length of consultation for each consultation it holds.
Consultation should avoid holiday periods (where possible).	Additional days will be added to compensate for days lost due to public bank holidays.
Public events should be towards the beginning or precede consultation periods.	The Council will aim to arrange public events early in the consultation periods in order to inform people and give them ample opportunity to respond. Text in the SCI will be amended to

	state this.
No mention of an Issues and Options document as part of the consultation process.	An ‘Issues and Options’ consultation is not a requirement. Although it is often used to consult people on the content of a Local Plan prior to publication, there can be other methods. Addition made to the Table on page 5 of the document to state that the plan preparation stage can include Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages.
No commitment to publicise the Local Plan examination process, and in particular the publication of the Inspector’s report, which may on occasion be open to challenge on procedural grounds.	Legislation (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) requires the Council to notify anyone who made a representation at the publication stage that a hearing is going to take place. Additional text has been added to the Table on page 5 of the document to reflect this. Legislation also requires the Council to notify persons who request to be notified of the publication of the Inspector’s Report, and to make it available at Council offices and on the Council’s website. In addition, Dorset Council typically issues press releases at such key milestones.
No commitment in the SCI to engagement after plans and policies have been adopted, which weakens accountability. A mechanism for community engagement should be in place to provide continuing accountability after adoption.	After plans become adopted they are somewhat fixed until formally reviewed (in which case the consultation process set out in the table titled ‘Local Plan production process’ starts again). The Council will monitor policy implementation on an annual basis and will publish its findings in an Annual Monitoring Report.

The implementation of planning

	<p>policies is a Development Management matter, which is dealt with in the section of the SCI relating to planning applications.</p>
Should be deeper engagement of local communities in the scoping and drafting of local plan content prior to formal consultation.	Comment noted. The Council is keen to engage with Town and Parish Councils and local communities as much as possible. However, the level of community engagement has to be balanced against the ambitious timescale for producing the plan and the resources available to the Council in respect of engaging with local communities.
The public, parish/town councils and neighbourhood plan groups should be engaged at all stages in the plan making process with an emphasis on 'front-loading'.	Ditto
Early in the plan making process, DC should invite parish/town councils to workshops; hold public exhibitions; run community events when most people are available.	Ditto
Evidence gathering criteria should be subject to consultation and evidence gathered subject to formal verification.	There may be certain instances where evidence based document are subject to consultation with statutory consultees and/or town and parish councils etc. However, the Council considers it will not always be appropriate or necessary to consult on evidence based documents. . Evidence produced to support the plan can be scrutinised and commented upon during consultation periods relating to the Local Plan etc.
Provide more detail about what methods of consultation are to be used at each stage.	Comment Noted. However, the SCI was drafted to be concise, accessible, and to allow flexibility regarding the methods of consultation that will be used.

Suggest adding a third column to the table with the heading 'Opportunities to get involved' that sets out what consultation takes place at each stage.	Ditto
Public should be informed and engaged throughout the process.	Agree. This is the Council's intention.

How we will consult

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
A very traditional and arguably dated approach to community involvement, i.e. Dorset Council will produce information and invite others to comment via public consultation.	Comment noted. The Council is keen to engage with the community as much as possible and use modern techniques such as digital tools to assist public involvement. However, the level of community engagement has to be balanced against the ambitious timescale for producing the plan and the resources available to the Council in respect of engaging with local communities.
Engagement should be more proactive than outlined and should seek to engage those who would not normally be motivated to be involved in planning policy.	Ditto
Methods listed lack a genuine sense of consultation i.e. that people can express a view and get a reasoned response to the points they have made. There are many ways of getting under the surface of the issues e.g. focus groups, citizen's juries, etc. Under the suggested statement it is not until the Inspector's hearing that the public can explicitly speak on the Plan, which is too late in the process.	Ditto
Should be greater emphasis placed on engaging local residents and businesses – including manning stands, drop-in sessions, etc. at established events and not just consultation-only events. Also in locations like supermarkets and town squares, schools.	Ditto
DC should consider a 'citizen's assembly' to	Ditto

<p>provide ongoing, frequent, regular community input during the development of the Local Plan.</p>	
<p>Should include specific strategies for the involvement of young people, isolated rural, residents, and those who do not have time to attend meetings and older people with access needs.</p>	Ditto
<p>There should be a wider distribution of information, particularly to younger people. (E.g. engage them through schools.)</p>	Ditto
<p>Publish a statement of measures that will be taken to ensure those excluded from communications will be consulted and informed.</p>	Ditto
<p>The Draft SCI gives a number of means by which it “may” consult but fails to give any undertaking about how it “will” consult at any of the key stages.</p>	<p>Comment noted. However, the SCI was drafted to be concise, accessible, and to allow flexibility regarding the methods of consultation that will be used.</p>
<p>Given size of the DC area, it is important that Local Plan consultation exercises capture the full range of views from different communities across Dorset – e.g. consultation events in each locality.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Consultation events will be held at different locations across the whole of the plan area to try and maximise the opportunities for people to engage with the Council on the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Should closely involve Town & Parish Councils (and other key organisations)</p>	<p>Comment noted. The Council is keen to engage with Town and Parish Councils, and other key organisations, as much as possible and use modern techniques such as digital tools to assist engagement. However, the level of engagement has to be balanced against the ambitious timescale for producing the plan and the resources available to the Council in respect of engaging with town and parish councils and other key organisations.</p>
<p>Publish a summary of the consultation document that can be read quickly and</p>	<p>Comment noted. This will be the aim.</p>

understood by everyone.

Policy team must be adequately resourced to deliver the Local Plan with an appropriate level of public engagement.	Comment noted.
DC should commit to using well designed web portals for the public to submit comments as previously they have been poorly designed.	Comment noted. The Council is progressing work in this area to try and ensure that the online submission form is well designed and user friendly.
Have a policy that consultations will be impartial and scrutinised by a third party before they are published.	Comment noted. However, it is unclear who the third party would be. Furthermore, it is considered that professional officers at the Council are the most appropriate people to produce consultation documentation. Also, it should be noted that Local Plans are examined by a Government appointed independent Inspector prior to them being adopted. Therefore, there is a third party check on the version of the plan that is submitted for examination.
Due to poor broadband in rural areas, please provide hard copies of documents in local libraries and to all parish councils.	Comment noted. Dorset Council is involved with work to improve broadband coverage across Dorset. The Council will provide hard copies of key consultation documents to the libraries in the plan area.

What happens to your comments

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Concern that it is proposed that there should be no acknowledgement of submitted comments.	Comment noted. It is hoped that the new consultation system will send out automatic acknowledgements of receipt. SCI amended to delete sentence on page 4 which read 'We will not acknowledge submitted comments unless requested.'
You should acknowledge receipt of comments on planning policy documents (particularly if	Comment noted. It is hoped that the new consultation system will

sent in electronic form).	send out automatic acknowledgements of receipt.
You may need to acknowledge comments at some stages, so either amend or delete blanket statement ruling out acknowledging comments.	Comment noted. SCI amended to delete sentence on page 4 which read 'We will not acknowledge submitted comments unless requested.'
Draft SCI does not appear to cover how consultation responses will be summarised or publicised.	It is appreciated that there are different methods and styles in respect of summarising consultation responses. It would not be appropriate to fix a particular style in the SCI. Summary reports relating to consultation responses received will be made available on the Council's website.
Should provide a plain English summary of consultation responses explaining how responses have influenced the plan.	Agreed. This is the intention.

Page 4 - Neighbourhood planning

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Would like reference to how NP groups are consulted with in the preparation of Local Plans/Planning Documents.	Neighbourhood plan groups will have the same opportunity as other organisations in Dorset to respond to local plan consultations.
There is insufficient support, advice and assistance to groups undertaking neighbourhood planning activities.	Comment noted. The Council aims to provide as much support as possible to groups progressing neighbourhood plans. However, the support, advice and assistance that can be provided is limited by resource constraints and other work priorities including the need to progress the Dorset Council Local Plan to a tight timetable. In addition to support provided by Dorset Council, neighbourhood plan groups can bid for government grants to help fund their work.
Promise of support 'tailored to the needs of the group' is lukewarm and wish-washy.	Comment noted. As set out above the Council aims to provide as much

	<p>support as possible to groups progressing neighbourhood plans. However, the support, advice and assistance that can be provided is limited by resource constraints and other work priorities including the need to progress the Dorset Council Local Plan to a tight timetable.</p>
Should provide a clear list of support to be given to neighbourhood plan groups, similar to the list on page 15 of the East Devon SCI. (Hazelbury Bryan and Holwell Parish Councils and Wareham Town Council provide this list.)	<p>Comment noted. The specific level of support provided to neighbourhood plan groups (NPGs), and the potential for setting this out in a list provided to neighbourhood plan groups, will be considered further. Any list that is produced will be published on the Council's website and made available to NPGs.</p>
List should set out 'baseline' support that will be provided to neighbourhood plan groups, plus optional support that may be provided. (Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd provides a list of services that Dorset Council should provide, including guidance notes, a link officer, regular meetings, mapping and other data provision such as contaminated land with no charge attached.)	<p>Comment noted. The specific level of support provided to neighbourhood plan groups (NPGs), and the potential for setting this out in a list provided to neighbourhood plan groups, will be considered further. Any list that is produced will be published on the Council's website and made available to NPGs.</p>
Dorset Council must provide neighbourhood plan groups with an SEA screening assessment – this should be listed.	<p>Comment noted. The specific level of support provided to neighbourhood plan groups (NPGs), and the potential for setting this out in a list provided to neighbourhood plan groups, will be considered further. Any list that is produced will be published on the Council's website and made available to NPGs.</p>
Dorset Council should engage with neighbourhood plan groups at an early stage to provide groups with a professional steer before policies are written as this can save time for both parties later on.	<p>Comment noted. The Council agrees that it is important to engage with neighbourhood plan groups at an early stage and will aim to do so. However, the level of engagement will be dependent on the amount of officer resource available taking into account other work priorities including the need to progress the</p>

	Dorset Council Local Plan to a tight timetable.
Should include reference to building capacity in local communities, as many lack the skills to create neighbourhood plans. Encourage parish/town councils to develop neighbourhood plans.	Comment noted. The Council will consider what role it can have in terms of building capacity in local communities.
The document should include a commitment to ongoing co-ordination and support after a plan is 'made', to ensure that it works effectively alongside the planning authority's Local Plan and other planning policy documents.	Plan implementation is a Development Management matter, which is dealt with in the section of the SCI relating to Planning Applications.

Pages 5 and 6 – Planning applications

Re. Town and Parish Councils

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Ensure that Parish and Town Councils are formally notified/consulted on all planning applications in their areas.	Agree. This is something that the Council does and will continue to do.
Dorset Council should notify /consult town and parish councils of all tree works applications in their parishes. (This provision was withdrawn by the former West Dorset District Council and has reduced community input into the preservation of trees at a time of climate crisis.)	Comment noted. The Council will consider the potential of notifying town and parish councils re tree works applications in their town/parish.
Parish and town councils should be involved as early as possible in individual planning applications, especially large scale or potentially controversial developments.	Comment noted. The Council seeks to involve town and parish councils as much as it can within the resources it has.
Parish Councils should have more time to respond to more controversial applications.	Comment noted. In certain circumstances the Council does provide an extension of time for town and parish councils to provide comments on planning applications. This will continue to be the case.
DC needs to ensure that the correct parish/town council are consulted.	Agreed.

Town / Parish councils should have more weight given to their comments and should have the right to call for applications to be considered by planning committee.	Comment noted. Comments received from Town and Parish Councils are fully considered by Dorset Council. However, there is nothing in legislation that would allow the Council to give additional weight to the comments received. Town and Parish Councils can request that applications are considered by planning committee. It is considered that Dorset Council, given it is the local planning authority responsible for determining applications, should decide whether applications should be considered by planning committee.
Specific support to parish councils re planning applications could include: a nominated officer for their area; officer contact details; officer availability to advise councillors on planning policy that should be taken into account; advice on affordable housing provision; and training on planning matters.	Comment noted. The Council will provide as much support as it can within the resources that it has. This will include officers providing advice and responding to queries. Furthermore, it is likely that planning workshops will be held to provide updates/training re planning matters.

Re. Hard copies

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Access to full size paper plans (A1, A0, etc.) is essential to understand the way in which a development will function.	Comment noted. However, unfortunately the Council does not have the resources to provide hard copies of plans to interested parties.
Hard copy plans should be available to statutory consultees on request for large developments. Few town and parish councils can print larger than A3.	Comment noted. However, unfortunately the Council does not have the resources to provide hard copies of plans to interested parties including statutory consultees/town and parish councils.

Re. Online system

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Need a way of checking that responses to consultations on applications have been	Agree. The Council will consider the use of a system that automatically

received by the Council – should be acknowledged.	acknowledges responses to consultations on planning applications.
All comments received should be available on the planning website.	Agree. Comments received are made available on the website and this will continue in the future.
Discharge of Conditions should be added to the website so everything is transparent.	Comment noted. Decisions relating to the discharge of conditions are set out on the Council's website. This will continue in the future.
The current online system operating across West Dorset is not fit for purpose for statutory consultees or for individuals attempting to access information.	Comment noted. The Council is aware that there are sometimes problems with the online system. It seeks to fix the problems as soon as possible after they occur. The Council is also considering the potential of implementing a new online system.
The current online system needs a significant overhaul to make it user-friendly – particularly as planning applications are not provided to parish councils on paper.	Comment noted. The Council is considering the potential of implementing a new online system.

Re. Consultation / publicity

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Hard to believe that the Emergency Services, or providers of street cleaning and waste disposal services, are not consulted at the planning stage	Comment noted. Emergency services and Dorset Waste Partnership (who provide street cleaning and waste disposal services) are consulted when it is considered necessary.
The period of notice for planning applications needs to be increased during holiday periods.	Comment noted. Due to the tight timeframes that planning applications have to be determined within it is not always possible to increase the period of notice for planning applications.
The Draft SCI gives a number of means by which it "may" consult but fails to give any undertaking about how it "will" consult.	Comment noted. The use of the word 'may' is intended to provide flexibility re the different ways that the Council could consult with communities etc.

Need to provide more detail about what methods of consultation are to be used under what circumstances. (In the interest of transparency and consistency, the methods of consultation with respect to applications should be expressed as 'will' rather than 'may').)	Comment noted. As set out above the use of the word 'may' is intended to provide flexibility re the different ways that the Council could consult with communities etc.
Unclear how planning applications are publicised. It is implied that publicity is via site notice rather than individual letters to neighbouring properties.	It is correct that publicity will include the use of site notices. The SCI does not propose to send individual notification letters to the occupiers of properties neighbouring an application site.
Should be a commitment to put site notices up early in prominent public places near to the site in question to give those living nearby the opportunity to comment.	Comment noted. The Council aims to put up site notices as early as possible and in prominent places. This will continue to be the case.
Parish Council (Symondsbury) happy to supply venues for larger scale consultations.	Offer welcomed. Thank you.
SCI should make clear that the public are able to attend committee meetings and speak about those applications which the committee considers.	Comment noted. The SCI refers to the fact that members of the public may speak at planning committee meetings. A footnote on page 5 of the SCI also provides a hyperlink to the current guidance for speaking at a planning committee meeting.
Those who have commented on applications should have the opportunity to speak at Council meetings when the application is being considered.	As set out in the SCI members of the public may speak at planning committee meetings.
Weight should be given to comments on planning applications based on how much the commentator will be impacted – e.g. the view of someone next door should be more important than someone living far away.	Comment noted. However, there is no basis for such an approach. National legislation requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
Would be helpful if SCI clarified where DC meets statutory minimum requirements for consultation and where it goes beyond.	Comment noted. However, the main point of the SCI is to set how and when the Council will involve

	<p>the community as part of its planning duties. Consequently, it is considered that it isn't necessary to make the change suggested.</p>
For applications on Council-owned land – the stakeholders (including the parish/town council) should be fully engaged in influencing and shaping proposals. Comments from the public should be fully considered prior to plans being finalised.	Comment noted. Where appropriate the Council will fully engage stakeholders (including Town and Parish Councils and the public) re applications on Council-owned land. This will give stakeholders an opportunity to influence and shape proposals.
Dorset Council should consider ways of ensuring community engagement with planning decisions. Officer delegations should be reviewed in this light, and consideration should be given to holding Area Planning Committee meetings at locations across the committee area.	Comment noted re the need to ensure community engagement with planning decisions. Nevertheless, the Council considers that the current rules relating to delegating decisions still provides adequate opportunities for applications to be determined by the relevant planning committee. Holding the area planning committee meetings in a single venue for each committee area is considered the most appropriate approach for practical reasons. This is based on considerations such as the need for appropriate venues and the benefits of clarity for all concerned about where the meetings will be held.

Re. Pre-app / planning surgeries

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Surgeries previously provided in Bridport for pre-application or general planning advice have been withdrawn. This is an unwelcome reduction in access to Dorset Council services for rural areas.	Comment noted. Unfortunately due to limited resources it is no longer possible for the Council to provide the surgeries.
Local, weekly planning surgeries should be reinstated.	Unfortunately due to limited resources it is no longer possible for the Council to provide local weekly planning surgeries.

Would like to see a positive commitment to offering timely pre-application advice – Purbeck's service should be emulated.	Agreed. An amendment has been made to the relevant part of the SCI to state that 'The Council will aim to provide timely pre-application advice.'
Suggest stating that pre-app advice can be confidential.	Comment noted. It is considered that this is a fairly detailed point that should be set out on the relevant part of the Council's website rather than in the SCI itself.
Applicants for major applications should be required to undertake community consultation prior to making a formal application.	Comment noted. However, under current legislation the Council cannot force applicants to undertake such consultation. Nevertheless, the Council would encourage that such community consultation is undertaken.
Discussions should be held in relation to the local list and validation requirements to ensure that these are proportionate and consistent in their application.	Comment noted. The Council will review the local list and validation requirements.

Re. Delegation scheme

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
SCI should include more information about when and why decisions are made by officers under delegated powers and, in particular, what impact on that process an objection from a parish council will have.	Comment noted. However it is considered that the points raised are fairly detailed in nature and it would be inappropriate to go into this level of detail in the SCI. Separate guidance could possibly be provided to Town and Parish Councils re the current scheme of delegation, how officers determine applications and how they take into account comments received from Town and Parish Councils.
Arrangements for delegation should be reviewed and made available on the website.	Comment noted. Information relating to any future changes to the scheme of delegation will be shared with interested parties.
As a much larger planning authority, planning decisions risk being more remote from local	Comment noted. Nevertheless, the Council considers that the current

communities. Officer delegations for decision-making, and the location of Area Planning Committee meetings should be considered in this light.	rules relating to officer delegations for decision-making are appropriate.
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Re. Planning committee

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Reports to planning committee should be quality controlled for logic and accuracy.	Comment noted. The Council aims to ensure reports are of a high quality including in terms of their logic and accuracy.
Should be monthly report to planning committee on all delegated decisions so that they and the public are made aware.	Comment noted. The Council will consider the potential of producing a monthly report as suggested.
Should be monthly reports to planning committee on planning appeals.	Comment noted. The Council does prepare summary reports of relevant appeal decisions for some committee meetings, and will consider providing this on a more regular basis.
Should be monthly reports to planning committee on all enforcement action so that they can monitor progress.	Comment noted. The Council will consider the potential of producing such reports.
SCI should provide details of how the Planning Committee is constituted – important as rural and urban interests can be quite different.	Comment noted. However, it is considered that the SCI is not the appropriate place for setting out such details.
Area planning committee meetings should be held locally.	Comment noted. Area planning committee meetings are held in their respective areas.
Controversial and major planning applications should be considered at Council meetings held in the local area so as to be accessible to those affected.	Comment noted. Area planning committee meetings are held in their respective areas.

Re. Enforcement

Consultee comment	Dorset Council response
Strongly support the commitment to maintaining confidentiality.	Support welcomed.
Would welcome a commitment by Dorset	Comment noted. The Council will

Council to ensuring adequate resources are available to deliver effective and timely enforcement.	aim to ensure that adequate resources are available to deliver effective and timely enforcement.
The entire planning process is undermined if there is not an effective system of enforcement.	The Council agrees that high quality effective enforcement is important in maintaining public trust in the planning system. As set out above the Council will aim to ensure that adequate resources are available to deliver effective and timely enforcement.
Suggest amending the sentence from "Where a breach has occurred we will consider the appropriate action to take" to "Where a breach has occurred we will consider the appropriate action to take, if any".	The Council agrees with this suggested amendment. There may be some instances where it isn't expedient to take action against a breach that has occurred.