

How to Become Involved in the Planning Process

Statement of Community Involvement 2025



Everyone who lives, works, runs businesses and studies in a place is affected by the planning system.

The council is committed to involving local communities and other stakeholders in planning matters, so they can help shape development in our district.

Contents

Introduction	5
Our Approach to Community Involvement	6
Key Principles of Engagement	7
Digital Engagement	8
How This Document is Structured	8
PART 1: Plan-making	9
What is Plan-making?	9
Who Will We Consult on Plans and Policy Documents?	10
Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees	10
Duty to Cooperate Consultees	10
The Wider Community	11
What Type of Documents We Will Consult You On	12
Commenting on Local Plans/DPDs, SPDs and Planning Guidance	13
How We Prepare and Consult on Development Plan Documents	14
How We Prepare and Consult on Supplementary Planning Documents	19
How We Prepare and Consult on Other Documents	21
PART 2: Neighbourhood Plans	21
What are Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders?	21
The Council’s Role in Neighbourhood Planning	22
PART 3: Planning Applications	25
Preparing Planning Applications - Advice for Applicants	25
Early Community Engagement	25
Pre-Application Advice	25
Validation	25
How Will We Publicise Planning Applications	26
Submitting Public Comments	28
Amendments to Applications	28
Consultee Comments on Application	29
Public Speaking	29
After the Decision is Reached	29
Appeals	29

Making Effective Comments

- Material Considerations – What Can You Comment On?
- Non-Material Considerations – What we Cannot Consider

Is our Statement of Community Involvement Working?

- More Information

Appendices

- Appendix A – Statutory and Other Consultees on Plan-Making**
- Appendix B – Glossary of Key Terms**
- Appendix C – Relevant Legislation**

30
30
31
31
31
32
32
35
39

Introduction

Everyone who lives, works, runs businesses and studies in a place is affected by the planning system. The council is committed to involving local communities and other stakeholders in planning matters, so they can help shape development in our district.

The document sets out our approach to community involvement in planning. This includes how to get involved in the preparation of planning policy and guidance documents, neighbourhood planning, and consultation on planning applications.

Producing and maintaining an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement is required by national planning legislation. We are required to review our SCl every five years.

For a full list of relevant legislation, see Appendix C.

Following the review, this edition updates the current SCl, which was adopted in 2019. There have been several changes since the last publication, including multiple revisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and other planning guidance, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the most effective way to consult relevant stakeholders. We must comply with the adopted SCl in preparing relevant planning policy documents and in consulting on planning applications.

Consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement was held from the 16th of July to the 26th of August 2025. Comments were received from a range of stakeholders, and appropriate changes were made.



Our Approach to Community Involvement

The SCI aims to build on the minimum requirements set out in planning legislation, improving community involvement in planning.

It also seeks to further the aim of the [council's Corporate Plan](#) for inclusive, accessible and fair operation, celebrating diversity and the contribution different groups make to the district.

By 'involvement' we mean any interaction between our planning team and the community, which can occur on many different levels:

Participation – active involvement in identifying local needs and priorities, such as workshops or exhibitions.

Consultation – seeking your views, such as through online consultation processes and surveys or advertising planning applications through site notices, newspaper adverts or online notifications.

Information – providing information such as advertisements in newspapers, website and social media updates and publishing reports and newsletters.

Key Principles of Engagement

We will apply the following general principles to community involvement in planning. Other organisations that involve the community in planning processes may also wish to use these principles. These may include, for example, Qualifying Bodies such as town

and parish councils who consult when producing Neighbourhood Plans and developers who are required to provide a Statement of Community Involvement with major planning applications.

At a minimum we will do the following:

Outreach: ● Seek views as early as possible ● Choose consultation processes that are proportionate in type and scale to the potential impacts of the proposed plan ● Target consultation to include people whom we consider would be most affected by the particular proposals or plans, and where possible we will include known interest groups ● Tell people who participate in the consultation how to access the results	Accessibility: ● Ensure involvement is open to all ● Take into account our duties under the Equality Act 2010 ● Write in clear, plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon ● Make accessible copies of documents available eg. Large Print, Braille, E-Reader compatible, upon request. ● Ensure that information received through consultation processes complies with all Data Protection legislation and Freedom of Information requirements	Information: ● Provide sufficient information for people to comment effectively ● Create concise consultation documents, without understating the complexities of any issues or decisions ● Make documents available for inspection online and at signposted public Inspection Points such as the council offices, libraries, or town/parish halls ● State clearly how to respond and by when ● Aim to make all representations/ comments publicly available
--	---	--



Digital Engagement

Increased use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and others and the rise in online working has changed the way people communicate and obtain local information. They can be useful tools for the council to utilise when seeking to connect with previously hard to reach groups. These groups are typically underrepresented in traditional engagement processes, meaning their views and needs aren't heard or fully considered.

The council will make use of digital technology as much as possible, but this will be carefully managed so that those with less access to or familiarity with these technologies are not excluded from the process. This will include, where appropriate, publicising consultations and other public engagement on the council's website and social media pages on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and also holding virtual engagement events where these are appropriate.

How This Document is Structured

The Statement of Community Involvement is structured in 3 parts and sets out:

- **PART 1 – Plan making:** Your opportunities for involvement in the preparation of plans and planning policy documents
- **PART 2 – Neighbourhood plans:** The neighbourhood planning process and opportunities for involvement in the preparation of neighbourhood plans, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders
- **PART 3 – Planning applications:** The publicity and consultation that is carried out in relation to specific applications in what is known as the development management process

PART 1: Plan-making

What is plan-making?

As a local planning authority, we have a statutory duty to put in place a framework of planning policies (known as the Development Plan) used to guide development proposals and to help determine planning applications.

These include Development Plan Documents (DPDs) such as the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which are guidance documents to support the Development Plan Documents. All DPDs and SPDs are considered by elected councillors to formally adopt them.

The council also prepares other planning documents, including topic-based guidance or information documents such as this Statement of Community Involvement.

Neighbourhood Plans will also form part of the Development Plan and more information about how these are consulted upon, and the council's role in that process can be found in Part 2 of this document.

Kent County Council leads on the county-wide [Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#) which forms part of the Development Plan and they have their own [Statement of Community Involvement](#).

Adopted Local Plan to 2040

The council adopted its new Dover District Local Plan to 2040 in October 2024, after nearly five years of preparation. This involved three rounds of public consultation at Regulation 18, Regulation 19 and Examination stages before formal adoption by a meeting of full council. There are currently no plans to review the Local Plan at this time (2025), but details of planned documents can be found in the [Local Development Scheme](#).



Who Will We Consult on Plans and Policy Documents?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 emphasises the need to involve all sections of the community in plan-making. The council also has a legal duty to consult residents and businesses when appropriate. In addition, legislation sets out who must be consulted at set stages of document preparation.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees

Many individuals and organisations contribute to the preparation of planning documents, bringing valuable local knowledge, views, and expertise. Some of these are Statutory Consultees (required by legislation), and others are non-statutory (not required by legislation, but provide useful insight). A list of Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees can be found in Appendix A.

The appropriate level of engagement will be assessed on a case-by-case basis determined by the nature and requirements of the particular document. This may alter over time due to changes in legislation or re-organisations of public bodies, so the lists are reviewed regularly. Therefore, the list provided in Appendix A is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive – the appropriate consultees will depend on the nature of the case.

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill 2025 seeks to consult on reducing the number of statutory consultees to streamline the planning process. We will update this guidance and other documents, if necessary, once those changes are finalised.

Duty to Cooperate Consultees

As a local planning authority, under the Localism Act 2011 and the NPPF, the council has a 'Duty to Cooperate' with other local authorities and specific groups or bodies when creating new planning policy documents. At all stages of plan-making, the Council has a legal requirement to consult with the specific, duty to cooperate and general consultation bodies when tackling issues at a larger than local scale. The full list of bodies that we are bound to work together with by the duty are listed in Appendix A.

The Wider Community

Members of the public, community or local interest groups and other organisations who would like to be notified about planning document consultations and the progress of local development plan documents can add their details to the council's database of consultees. You will receive an email when opportunities arise to make representations on proposed planning documents. The list is not fixed, and anyone can ask for their details to be added or removed by going to our website [here](#), or by emailing planning.policy@dover.gov.uk or telephoning 01304 872244.

Members of the public can also be kept informed of any plan making updates, including new consultation events, by subscribing to Planning Policy updates through [Keep Me Posted](#).

When planning documents go out for consultation, paper copies and comment forms will be made available at 'Inspection points', where they are relevant to the consultation document/

topic. In all cases, documents will be available at the main council offices in Whitfield, and where appropriate, in some or all of the six libraries in the district (Ash, Aylesham, Deal, Dover, Sandwich and St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe). The addresses of these libraries can be found on the [Dover District Council website](#).

What Type of Document Will We Consult You On?

A wide range of locally prepared planning documents are considered when planning decisions are made on applications.

Opportunities for community involvement in the preparation of these documents vary, depending on their status and purpose. Some documents are published for information purposes

to assist in understanding the latest data and information. Levels of community involvement in the preparation of each document are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 - Planning Documents and their purpose

Type of Document	Purpose	Level of Community Involvement
Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (Includes Local Plans)	A Local Plan and/or planning documents that set out a vision and framework for the future development of a district	Targeted Stakeholder and Public Consultation
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)	To expand upon policies in the Local Plan and provide more detail about the way the policies should be used	
Neighbourhood Development Plans <i>This is a Development Plan document but is produced by the Qualifying Neighbourhood Group (usually Town and Parish Councils)</i>		

Type of Document	Purpose	Level of Community Involvement
Other planning related strategies and other supporting documents or guidance such as: ● Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans ● Strategies related to planning matters such as Green Infrastructure or Sustainable Travel ● Community Infrastructure Levy ● Statement of Community Involvement (this document) ● Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	To set out strategic planning objectives and implementation schemes to achieve them	Targeted Stakeholder Consultation and/or Public Consultation (depending on the document)
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	A programme for preparing new Local Development Plan Documents and other planning documents	Published for information only
Factual reports, such as: ● Authority Monitoring Report ● Land Supply Report ● Planning Newsletter ● Infrastructure Funding Statement	Reports progress on implementing the adopted Local Plan and includes data about planning applications, progress on plan making and planning obligations	

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

An assessment submitted alongside development plan documents and required by Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which aims to ensure sustainability by assessing the plan's impact on the environmental, social and economic landscape and considering viable alternatives and are also subject to public consultation. The SA is usually combined with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and can also be relevant to Supplementary Planning Documents.

Commenting on Local Plans/DPDs, SPDs and Planning Guidance

How Will We Consult? - The council will consult on planning documents through our online 'planning portal'. Here you can create a personal or organisation account, and be notified directly of any new consultations commencing, updates on the processing of any comments you make and progress of the plan you are interested in.

Can I Comment In Writing? - You can also request a hard copy of a comment form be sent to you, or collect one from a listed 'Inspection point' on the consultation notice. You can also return a comment form by email to planning.policy@dover.gov.uk, by attaching a copy or scanning a written copy.

How Can My Community Group Get Involved? Where a group (for example an action group) shares a common view on how the documents should be changed or comments you wish to make, it is most effective if the group only makes a single response. In such cases the response should indicate how many people the group represents, and how the group's response has been authorised.

What Can I comment On? In considering what you can include when commenting on planning documents, 'material considerations' listed in the

planning application section (Part 3) may be relevant, especially with regards to any proposed site allocations. However, you will also be able to comment on the overall strategies, policies or information contained within the plan or document and also whether you think something is missing from them such as a site or a specific issue – known as an 'omission'. The same weight is given to an issue whether it appears in hundreds of responses or only in one, and duplicate comments are not required.

National legislation sets out certain criteria for commenting on Local Plans/DPDs at the publication/pre-submission (known as Regulation 19) stage. Comments must be within three specific remits, that include:

- **Legal Compliance** – does the plan meet the legal requirements set out in legislation?
- **Soundness** – has the plan been positively prepared, justified, effective, and is it consistent with national policy?
- **Meets the Duty to Cooperate** – has the council, in preparing the plan, engaged and worked effectively with neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies?



How We Prepare and Consult on Development Plan Documents

There are four distinct stages in preparing a Development Plan Document (DPD) (including Local Plans), as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Table 2 - Development Plan Document Stages and Engagement Methods

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
Stage 1: Plan Preparation (Regulation 18)	Information gathering and survey work to identify the main issues and prepare the evidence base for the Local Plan / Development Plan Documents and initial Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents. At the initial stages of producing a plan the council identifies and engages with key stakeholders in the community, to invite them to identify relevant issues, influence the options and examine the evidence.	We will: - As a minimum, ensure that we comply with the relevant current planning regulations - Write to statutory consultees to say we intend to produce a Local Plan/DPD and invite them to say what issues they think the plan should cover - Directly consult all specific, general and other bodies who are relevant to the topic/document - Advertise our intention to produce a plan, including a notification on the council's website, so that the public and organisations may register their interest - Consult with town and parish councils, community groups and the wider community at least once during this stage in the preparation of the document. This will include: - Publishing consultation documents online - the preferred route for comments is via the planning portal (website) because this helps make the process as efficient as possible - Advertise consultation/engagement events in press releases and on social media and make it clear where material can be viewed by the community in hard copy and online; - Directly notify residents or persons carrying on business in the area, where appropriate (this may be through the 'Keep Me Posted' or the council's consultation portal databases)

Continued over

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
	Typically, this stage includes a sequence of engagement exercises, both formal and informal, leading to the preparation of the plan for the publication stage.	- Consider, where appropriate, the following methods for wider publicity and engagement: - Workshops or focus groups - Online exhibitions or virtual drop-ins - In person drop-in events, displays or exhibitions - Meetings (one to one or group) - Targeted measures for hard-to-reach groups - Social media and/or posters - Radio broadcasts - Producing non-technical summary documents, and other helpful tools such as FAQs, maps and diagrams explaining the key issues and proposals - Make all comments received publicly available at an appropriate stage - Maintain and add people to our planning database of consultees at any time, having regard to data protection requirements - Record and take into account comments received at this stage, together with any comments on the technical evidence
Stage 2: Publication and/or pre-Submission (Regulation 19)	Publication or Pre-Submission Local Plan/ DPD and Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Habitats Regulations Assessment (if required) will be prepared.	We will: - As a minimum, ensure that we comply with the relevant current planning regulations - Consult the wider community and all relevant stakeholders on the DPD for at least six weeks - Directly notify residents or persons carrying on business in the area, where appropriate (this may be through 'Keep Me Posted' or the council's consultation portal); - Publish consultation documents online (this may be within the consultation portal)

Continued over

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
	Formal stakeholder and community consultation will take place, and amendments made as necessary, to help shape the document/s. The council will consult on the final draft of the plan and other documents before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Comments received at this stage are passed directly to the Planning Inspector for their consideration as part of the Submission to the Planning Inspector, through the examination process.	● Make the documents and other relevant evidence documents available for inspection at the council's office and at other public inspection points (such as libraries) across the district ● Publicise where and when the documents may be inspected in the press and online ● Provide forms and guidance for making comments, using standard forms and online - the preferred route for comments is via the consultation portal because this helps make the process as efficient as possible ● Directly consult all statutory, specific, general and other bodies in writing ● Directly invite Town and Parish Councils, community groups and the wider community to participate at least once during this stage ● Advertise the consultation and any engagement events in press releases and on social media and make it clear where material can be viewed in hard copy and online ● Make printed copies of the plan available to at a reasonable charge upon request ● Consider, where appropriate, the following methods for wider publicity and engagement: ● Workshops or focus groups ● Online Exhibitions or virtual drop-ins ● In person drop-in events, displays or exhibitions ● Meetings (one to one or group) ● Targeted measures for hard-to-reach groups ● Social media and/or posters ● Radio broadcasts ● Producing non-technical summary documents, and other helpful tools such as FAQs, maps and diagrams explaining the key issues and proposals

Continued over

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
		● Make all comments received publicly available at an appropriate stage ● Maintain and add people to our planning database of consultees at any time, having regard to Data protection requirements ● Record and summarise comments received at this stage, together with any comments on the technical evidence ● Forward all comments (representations) received at this stage to the Secretary of State (Planning Inspector)
Stage 3: Examination	Independent examination carried out by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, who tests the soundness of the Local Plan/ Development Plan Document and compliance with this SCI. Members of the public and relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees may be invited to submit written comments and/ or speak at examination hearings.	We will: ● Submit the plan and supporting information for public examination ● Comply with all the relevant planning regulations for the submission and examination of the plan ● Ensure that all the relevant submission documents are available for inspection on our website and at the council's office and other inspection points, as appropriate ● Notify all those who made representations at the Publication stage of the date, time and place of the hearings, and the name of the person appointed to hold the examination (Inspector) ● Appoint a Programme Officer to assist the Inspector with the examination who will publish full details of the examination on the website and notify representors/participants of details of the examination ● Keep our website up to date with examination hearing details and documents. ● We may: ● use social media to inform people of examination details ● broadcast examination hearings on the website.

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
Stage 4: Adoption	Inspector produces a binding report following the examination. The Council amend the Local Plan/ Development Plan Document in accordance with the Inspector's recommendations Once it is confirmed the document is legally sound, Cabinet recommends to full Council to formally adopt it.	We will: ● Publish the Inspector's report online and notify anyone who requested to be notified of its receipt ● Publish dates of relevant Cabinet and Full Council meetings relating to adoption on our website ● Send the adoption statement to the Secretary of State and any person who asked to be notified ● Publish the adopted plan/document, a sustainability appraisal report, and any other relevant information alongside the adoption statement available on our website ● Issue a press release and/or use social media to inform people of this stage and outcome and where documents can be viewed ● Publish a hard copy of the adopted plan, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA/SEA) report, and any other relevant information alongside the adoption statement in hard copy at the Inspection Points ● Allow for hard copies of adopted plans to be purchased and posted at a reasonable cost, upon request

How We Prepare and Consult on Supplementary Planning Documents

An SPD is produced in a similar way to a Development Plan Document, but it is not subject to public examination. The statutory requirements for producing an SPD, including public consultation,

are set out in Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The stages are as follows:

Table 3 - Supplementary Plan Document Stages and Engagement Methods

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	How We Will Engage and Record Engagement
Stage 1: Preparation	Information gathering and survey work. All the relevant stakeholders/ groups and individuals need to be identified and involved in the early stages of preparing the SPD	We will: ● Identify specific groups and individuals who are likely to have an interest in what the SPD will say, and undertake targeted engagement with those ● Engage more widely with the general public if it is considered relevant and appropriate to do so ● Record the feedback from early engagement and how it has influenced the SPD
Stage 2: Production	The draft SPD is prepared, along with a draft sustainability appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Habitats Regulations Assessment (if required). All comments received are considered and the document is finalised to take account of agreed changes,	We will: ● Comply with the relevant planning regulations and consult publicly for at least four weeks ● Publish guidance online on how to view and make comments on the draft SPD ● Produce a statement of consultation, setting out the main issues raised in SPD preparation and how we have addressed those ● Make documents available on the council's website (this may be via the council's consultation portal) and in hard copy at all/ some inspection points in the district (such as libraries) ● Directly consult the statutory, specific, general consultees and other bodies who are relevant to the topic of SPD being prepared

Continued over

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	How We Will Engage and Record Engagement
	including a statement detailing how any comments have been addressed and how the sustainability issues have been taken into account.	● Directly notify town and parish councils and residents or persons carrying on business in the area, where appropriate (this may be through the 'Keep Me Posted' or the council's consultation portal databases) ● Consider using one or more of the following methods of community engagement, depending on the nature of the SPD: ● Hold workshops, drop-ins or focus groups ● Hold public or town/parish meetings ● Advertise and promote the consultation on social media and/or newsletters ● Advertise in local newspapers ● There may be targeted measures for 'hard-to-reach' groups relevant to the topic of the SPD. ● Make all the comments received publicly available
Stage 3: Adoption	The final SPD is adopted by the Council and is subject to monitoring and review.	We will: ● Publish the adopted SPD, consultation statement and an adoption statement on the website, along with any other relevant documentation ● Produce a statement of consultation, setting out the main issues raised and how we have addressed those ● Make these documents available for inspection at the council offices and where appropriate, Inspection points (such as libraries) ● Send a copy of the adoption statement to any person who has asked to be notified of the adoption ● Advertise adoption through a press release and/or social media/newsletters

How We Prepare and Consult on Other Documents

The planning department prepares many other strategic and supporting documents which require public engagement.

Consultation on these types of documents will follow a similar approach to Supplementary Planning Documents, as outlined above, and will include

stakeholder engagement relevant to the topic and if public engagement is held, it will be for a minimum of 4 weeks.

These types of documents include, but are not limited to:

- Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan



PART 2: Neighbourhood Plans

What are neighbourhood plans and development orders?

Neighbourhood Plans allow communities to establish general planning policies for the development of land in the area.

They form part of the overall Development Plan once they are adopted but follow a different process to a Local Plan/DPD. Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders can grant planning permission for specific types of development in a specific Neighbourhood Area. Neighbourhood Plans and Orders must be prepared in accordance with relevant legislation.

Neighbourhood Planning is often led by town and parish councils but can also be led by Neighbourhood Forums and Community Groups. They initiate the process, set the scope of, and prescribe the level of community involvement regarding the plan or order. They commence and lead the engagement.

Further information on the Neighbourhood Planning process and available support can be found [here](#).

The Council's Role in Neighbourhood Planning

We are required by law to offer help and advice to groups producing neighbourhood plans. This includes:

- Policy guidance to support the neighbourhood planning process
- Advice on methods of public consultation and engagement
- Advice on how to publicise the proposed plan to the community, how to consult and publicise
- Advice on the availability of grant funding for neighbourhood planning groups

This is in addition to our commitments during the individual plan stages, as set out in the table below.

Table 4 - Neighbourhood Plan Stages and Engagement Methods

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
Stage 1: Designation	Designation gives a Neighbourhood Area and its nominated steering group (e.g. a parish council) the power and responsibility to proceed with drafting a Neighbourhood Plan	We will: ● Assist a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group/ Neighbourhood Forum with designating their area ● Determine applications for neighbourhood areas ● For unparished areas, we will consult on applications for neighbourhood area designation for a minimum of 6 weeks and publicise the consultation on our website ● Publicise designation of a Neighbourhood Area (via social media, website and/or press releases) ● Direct the relevant body towards guidance and information ● Where possible, share any data already held which may inform the evidence base (such as mapping information) with the relevant body

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
Stage 2: Pre-submission	The Neighbourhood Plan is drafted by the Qualifying Body (Town/ Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum, or Community Group) and consulted upon with the community prior to submission to the Council (Regulation 14)	We will: ● Prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report of the emerging neighbourhood plan and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), where relevant ● Advise on the consultation process and who to consult ● Comment on the draft neighbourhood plan with advice and guidance ● Publicise the consultation on our website and social media
Stage 3: Publication	Following the pre-submission consultation, the document is amended as appropriate, and submitted to the council for a six-week public consultation (Regulation 16)	We will: ● When a Plan or Order is submitted, assess the documents compliance with statutory requirements ● Consult on the Publication version (the Submission Plan) for a minimum of 6 weeks on our website (or consultation portal) with all statutory consultees and interested stakeholders ● Provide a hard copy of the plan and supporting documents at the council offices for inspection, and at Inspection points appropriate to the area ● Advertise the consultation on our website, social media and/or newsletters ● Respond to the consultation as a stakeholder to highlight potential issues around compliance with the Local Plan and national policy to ensure that the Basic Conditions have been met ● Collate all responses and prepare them for submission to the Examiner

Continued over

Stage	Purpose of This Stage	Community Involvement Approach
Stage 4: Examination	With the council's assistance, an independent examination is set up to scrutinise and test the soundness of the plan. Once complete, the examiner's report is published and, if found sound, it can proceed to a referendum within the Neighbourhood Area	We will: ● Assist with the appointment of the independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner ● Assist with arrangements for the Examination ● Advertise the Examination to interested parties and the local community ● Manage and fund the process of the examination ● Answer any questions raised by the examiner ● Publicise the examiner's report on our website Note – additional consultation may take place if the council or other parties disagree with the Examiners findings.
Stage 5: Referendum	A referendum is held on the Neighbourhood Plan, requiring more than 50% of votes to be cast in favour to pass	We will: ● Make arrangements for the referendum. This will be organised by the local authority's elections unit ● Publish information about the neighbourhood plan 28 working days before the date of the referendum ● Give notice 25 working days before the given date that a referendum is taking place and the date of the poll ● Publish the results of the referendum
Stage 6: Adoption	If successful, The Neighbourhood Plan is formally adopted ('made') and published (Regulation 20)	We will: ● 'Make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan (subject to outcome of referendum) and prepare a report to Cabinet/Full Council ● Place the adopted plan on our website as part of the Development Plan ● Advertise the adoption on our website, social media and/or newsletters ● Notify all consultees who asked to be notified about the adoption

PART 3: Planning Applications

There are various stages in the planning application process.

Consultation and publicity procedures in the planning application process are governed by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and

other legislation. There are also different types of application. More information relating to different types of application is available here: [Introduction - Consent types - Planning Portal](#)

Preparing Planning Applications - Advice for Applicants

Early community engagement

National planning policy strongly supports early community engagement and identifies that it has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Engaging residents, councillors and other local stakeholders at the earliest possible stage in the scheme development process provides an opportunity for them to have a meaningful role in shaping their places and allows developers to benefit from local knowledge.

We strongly encourage applicants to discuss their proposals with the local community, appropriate statutory and non-statutory consultees and the relevant town or parish council at an early stage, prior to submitting an application. For major applications, this may include in-person events such as local exhibitions, public meetings, information sharing such as circulation of leaflets or digital engagement with use of social media or online engagement platforms, or the creation of a well-publicised dedicated website. For householder applications, these may not be required.

Pre-application advice

There is no formal public consultation carried out when applicants request pre-application advice. However, anyone seeking planning permission is

encouraged to talk to those likely to be affected by the proposal and consider their views before submitting an application.

Validation

When planning applications are received by the council, we first check to ensure that all the necessary supporting information has been provided. This

process is called 'Validation'. Larger and more complex applications tend to require more supporting information.

How We Will Publicise Planning Applications

Table 5 - How We Publicise Planning Applications

Type of Development	What applicants need to do	What we will do
Major Residential development of 10 or more dwellings (or if no number is given a site of more than 0.5 ha) Or Non-residential development with floor space of 1,000 sqm (or a site of more than 1 ha directly involved in development)	- Choose appropriate methods to involve the community, e.g. public meetings/exhibitions, workshops, consultation website. - Provide a statement with the application, describing how the community was involved with the application and, if applicable, how the application has been amended to take into account any comments raised. - Consider local planning documents and national guidance.	- Include the application in our weekly list of valid applications - Publish the application documents on our website - Post site notices on or near the proposed development site - Advertise in the local press - Consult statutory consultees, non-statutory consultees and infrastructure service providers as appropriate. - Notify the relevant Town/Parish Council - Publish all comments received on the online application file

Type of Development	What applicants need to do	What we will do
Minor Smaller in scale than major development and outside the definition for Change of Use or Householder	- Consider methods of community involvement appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development - Provide a statement describing the actions taken to involve the community with the application - Consider local planning documents and national guidance	- Post site notices on or near the development site - Notify the relevant Town/Parish Council - Advertise in the local press if the application: - Is for a listed building - Is in a conservation area - Is near to or affects a public right of way - Is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment - Departs from the development plan - Affects the setting of a listed building/conservation area
Other Includes the categories of: - Change of Use; which does not involve building or engineering work - Householder; within the curtilage of a dwelling that requires permission and is not change of use It may also include other types of application such as Listed Building Consent, Prior Approval, Lawful Development Certificates	- It is good practice to consult with neighbours before submitting a planning application and any consultation actions could be reported within the planning application - Consider local planning documents and national guidance	- Consult statutory consultees, non-statutory consultees and infrastructure service providers, as appropriate. - Publish all comments received on the online application file



Submitting Public Comments

There is a statutory consultation period of a minimum of 21 working days following posting of the site notice (although this may be for a lesser period when undertaking a re-consultation). Anyone can submit comments during that time.

All comments are read and taken into account, but they can only be given weight when making our decision if they are made on valid planning grounds (also known as “material planning considerations”). See the section below ‘Making Effective Comments’ for advice on what counts as a material consideration.

We may consider comments that are received after the consultation period has ended but cannot guarantee to do so. We do not accept responsibility for, and cannot take into account, comments that fail to reach us in time because they have been delayed or lost

in the postal system. For these reasons, the best way to submit your comments is via our website before the consultation deadline expires. We will not reply individually to those who submit comments.

Submit comments on planning applications at the link [here](#), or by searching for the specific application on our portal [here](#) using the application reference year/number.



The weekly list of validated planning applications is available from dover.gov.uk/weeklyplanninglist or register for regular updates by signing up to [Keep Me Posted](#).

Consultee Comments on Applications

Planning legislation and guidance specifies that various organisations must be consulted when an application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

These are known as statutory consultees. We always consult the relevant town or parish council, and the other statutory consultees vary according to the type of application. For example, on a Listed Building Consent application for works to a Grade 1 listed building, Historic England must be consulted.

Internal professional advice may also be sought from officers within the council who have expertise in construction, conservation/heritage, design, trees, landscape design, biodiversity, open space, noise, pollution, licensing, and legal matters.

Comments received from statutory consultees and internal consultees are available to view via our website here by searching for the application using the application reference year/number.

Public Speaking

When an application is to be determined by the Planning Committee, town and parish councils, interested parties and members of the public can request to speak at the committee meeting.

This is usually limited to one person speaking in favour of the application and

one person against. The speakers are allowed up to three minutes each. Dover District Councillors may also speak.

Details of how to request to speak at a Planning Committee meeting, and the associated rules, can be found on our website [here](#).

Amendments to Applications

It is common for submitted applications to be altered during the process of assessing the application. These changes usually come about through negotiation between the applicant and the case officer, for example following receipt of comments from consultees or local residents.

We may reconsult when amended details are received. The Council will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to reconsult and in doing so will consider whether the amendments are significant enough that failing to reconsult would unfairly prevent representations from being made.

Re-consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees will take place when amended guidance is required. For example, we would re-consult if we consider that the new proposals are likely to cause any greater detrimental impact on the occupants of adjoining properties.

After the Decision is Reached

We notify the applicant or agent of the decision. A copy of the decision notice is placed on our website along with a copy of the committee or officer’s report.

Anyone who has commented upon a planning application will be notified of the decision by email.

Appeals

We notify the applicant or agent of the Only applicants have the right of appeal; there are no third-party rights of appeal. The appeal process is managed by the

independent Planning Inspectorate. Details of all appeal rules and procedures can be found by visiting the national Planning Portal website [here](#).



Making Effective Comments

The Council welcomes views from everyone and will take into account any comment that it receives in response to consultation on applications or plans, provided it relates to valid planning matters.

Do:

- ✓ Always provide comments in writing (electronic/paper) so that there is a written record of what you have said – we cannot take into account views made over the phone or in person as we cannot record them effectively.
- ✓ Keep your responses concise and to the point. This helps the council to record and report your comments.
- ✓ Respond during the consultation period to give the council enough time to consider your comments. Late submissions will only be considered where exceptional circumstances allow, and cannot be considered once the decision has been issued.

Do not:

- ✗ Submit any comments you do not wish to be published and seen by others. Your name and comments will be public information.
- ✗ Submit racist or other discriminatory responses. The council cannot disclose or consider any consultation responses that are defamatory or likely to incite racial hatred. The Equality Act 2010 applies which makes it unlawful for anyone to induce or attempt to induce another person to discriminate on the grounds of the 'protected characteristics'. This means that any comments in respect of a planning policy document or planning application based on discriminatory grounds are unlawful and may constitute a criminal offence for which the author of the comments may be prosecuted.

NB: We will redact comments which are:

- Discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010
- Non-GDPR compliant or
- Irrelevant to the application

In accordance with national legislation, the starting point for determining planning applications is the [Development Plan](#). The submission of a representation (either in support or in objection to a proposal)

doesn't guarantee a particular outcome; however, all material considerations raised in submitted comments during the consultation process will be considered in the assessment of the application.

Material considerations – What can you comment on?

The council can only take account of 'material considerations' when making a decision on planning applications. Comments that contain 'material considerations' will be weighed in the decision process according to their planning merit.

Please see examples below of common topics that can be considered as 'material considerations'. The lists are not exhaustive and are only provided as guidance on the

types of things you may wish to consider in your response. A list of common material considerations is also available on the national Planning Portal website here.

- The building or works planned: design, appearance and materials, overlooking/loss of privacy, visual amenity, loss of light or overshadowing, layout and density of the building, disabled persons' access

- Natural & historic environment: landscaping or loss of trees, effect on conservation areas and listed buildings, nature conservation, and archaeology
- Impact of the development: adequacy of site access, parking areas and loading/turning, highway safety or

traffic generation, noise, smells and disturbance, hazardous materials

- Policy considerations: local and national planning policies and guidance and planning history of the site.

NB: You can submit additional information, such as photographs and maps, to support your comments

Non-material considerations – What we cannot consider

The following issues are NOT considered to be material to planning and cannot be taken into account in the decision-making process:

- Matters of a personal nature, such as information about individuals which is not relevant to the planning application and any information which could directly identify people or discriminate against people
- Trade objections where the complaint directly relates to anticipated competition from the proposed development

- Perceived loss of value to the objector's property or loss of view
- Issues covered by other regulatory regimes such as Building Control, unless the matters overlap with the planning considerations
- Alleged unauthorised activities or works not directly relating to the proposal under consideration and which might be dealt with through other planning investigations

Is Our Statement of Community Involvement Working?

As a minimum, the Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed every five years, as required by legislation.

We will continue to review our engagement methods before that time to ensure they are working effectively

and remain in accordance with any updated legislation, and will review the SCI earlier if required.

More Information

For more information about:

- The adopted Local Development Plan Documents in Dover District, see our website [here](#)
- Email alerts of planning document consultations, click [here](#)
- Other local policies and planning guidance - contact the Planning Policy

Team by email - planning.policy@dover.gov.uk, or phone 01304 872244

- Specific planning applications, use our planning portal or contact Development Management by email - developmentmanagement@dover.gov.uk, or phone 01304 821199.

Appendices

Appendix A – Statutory and Other Consultees on Plan-Making

This list is drawn from Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Schedule 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011, as appropriate to Dover District. The situational requirement to engage with different consultees is set out in the legislation.

N.B. some specific consultation bodies are outside the geographical confines of the district but may be consulted on strategic matters where appropriate.

- ✓ Will be consulted, notified or informed
- Will be consulted on plans where the topic is relevant or the status of the document requires them to be consulted by legislation
- S Consulted on Sustainability Appraisal Report / Sustainability Appraisal Screening Determination
- * Prescribed bodies for the purpose of the Duty to Cooperate
- n/a Not applicable to Dover District

Statutory Consultation Bodies – those we have to, where appropriate, consult and inform in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Regulations 2 and 4)	Local Plans	Neighbourhood Plans	SPDs
Specific consultees and prescribed bodies			
Mining Remediation Authority (formerly The Coal Authority)*	✓ / S	●	● / S
The Environment Agency*	✓ / S	✓	● / S
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage)*	✓ / S	✓	● / S
Historic England	✓ / S	✓	●
Natural England*	✓ / S	✓	●
The Mayor of London*	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transport for London	n/a	n/a	n/a
Network Rail	✓	✓	●
National Highways	✓	✓	●

Statutory Consultation Bodies – those we have to, where appropriate, consult and inform in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Regulations 2 and 4)	Local Plans	Neighbourhood Plans	SPDs
The Marine Management Organisation*	✓	✓	●
The Civil Aviation Authority*	●		●
Adjoining/Overlapping Authorities*	✓	●	●
Parish & Town Councils	✓	✓	●
Kent Police	✓	✓	●
Electronic communications companies who own or control apparatus situated in Dover District	✓	✓	●
Relevant utility and infrastructure providers (including water, sewerage, electricity, gas and telecommunications)	✓	✓	●
NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board	✓	✓	●
NHS England*	●	●	●
Homes England*	✓	✓	●
Kent County Council*	●	✓ / S	●
Highways and Transport	●	✓	●
Lead Local Flood Authority	● / S	✓	● / S
Minerals and Waste	●	✓	●
Developer Investment Team	●	✓	●
Office of Rail & Road Regulation*	●		●
General consultation bodies			
Voluntary organisations	●	●	●
Ethnic and racial community groups	●	●	●
Religious and faith groups	●	●	●

Statutory Consultation Bodies – those we have to, where appropriate, consult and inform in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Regulations 2 and 4)	Local Plans	Neighbourhood Plans	SPDs
Disability groups	●	●	●
Groups representing businesses	●	●	●
Local residents, tenants and representative groups	●	●	●
Local businesses	●	●	●
Kent Nature Partnership*	●	●	●
Hard to reach groups, including those with protected characteristics	●	●	●
Councillors	✓	✓	✓
Landowners and developers	●	●	●
Emergency services	●	●	●
Wildlife and biodiversity organisations	●	●	●
Sport and recreation groups	●	●	●
Amenity, recreation and countryside groups	●	●	●
Environmental and conservation groups	●	●	●
Schools and colleges	●	●	●
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople groups	●	●	●
Healthcare groups and providers	●	●	●
Registered providers of social housing	●	●	●
Transport groups	●	●	●
The South East Local Enterprise Partnership*	●	●	●

Appendix B – Glossary of Key Terms

Adoption	The process of integrating a draft planning document into the Development Plan, by a meeting of Cabinet/full Council
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)	A report produced each year by local authorities, which assesses progress with, and the effectiveness of, its plan-making documents
Community/Neighbourhood Development Order	A method to grant planning permission for specific types of development in a specific neighbourhood area, led by a local community organisation, town/parish council or Neighbourhood Forum
Community Right-to-Build Order	A type of Community Development Order, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, which allows certain community organisations to bring forward smaller-scale development on a specific site, without the need for planning permission
Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan	An appraisal of the special character of a specific, designated area, including a list of buildings and features which make a positive or negative contribution to the character and appearance of the area, where an opportunity may exist for improvement of the area by redevelopment of a building or site, and a management strategy which set out policies and procedures to manage, monitor and enforce change in the area
Consultation	The process of formally seeking public comments on planning documents and applications, as per the relevant statutory requirements
Consultation Statement	A summary of the main issues raised by the consultation
Development Plan	The suite of documents which guide development in the district. These must be prepared in accordance with national legislation. They often provide details and requirements on the size, scale and nature of development in different settings, and allocate sites for development to meet set targets.
Duty to Cooperate	The legal duty for neighbouring local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plan and marine plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A report, introduced by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017), to be submitted alongside some planning applications which assesses the impact of development on the local environment, giving the public an opportunity to comment on these matters during consultation.
Green Infrastructure Strategy	A document to ensure the district's green infrastructure is planned, designed and managed to better meet our commitments to addressing the impacts of climate change, poor health and biodiversity loss.
Habitats Regulation Assessment	A pre-submission document, required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended, to give regard to the potential impacts on European sites (SACs, SPAs & Ramsar sites) in England and Wales and their inshore waters (within 12 nautical miles of the coast).
Infrastructure	Facilities that are needed for the operation of a society, such roads, open spaces, community and health services and schools.
Inspection Point	Locations across the district where planning consultation documents can be viewed in hard copy. As a minimum this means the main council offices at Whitfield but may also include libraries within the district.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	A document which identifies the infrastructure needs of different settlements in the district, and sets out how maintenance and improvements will be funded and delivered
Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)	An annual publication setting out how funds received from Planning Obligations (Section 106 agreements) have been collected or spent in the district.
Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	A strategy produced by the council to plan and deliver and improve safe, accessible cycling and walking infrastructure in the district.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	This public statement sets out the programme for the preparation of the Local Plan and Local Development Documents.
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	The governing body responsible for determining planning applications and managing and delivering development within a geographic area.

Material Planning Considerations	Matters considered by Planning Officers when determining a planning application
Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP)	Produced by Kent County Council, these documents set out plans relating to mineral and waste developments in Kent
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
Neighbourhood Development Order	A form of Neighbourhood Planning which allows a Qualifying Body to grant planning permission for specific types of development in a specific neighbourhood area.
Neighbourhood Plan	A Development Plan Document prepared by a Qualifying Body within a local community, which set out policies and proposals for the future development of a neighbourhood. These must conform with the strategic policies of the Local Pla
Planning Inspector(ate)	The independent body and persons nominated by the Secretary of State for Housing to examine Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and ensure they are legally sound and compliant with national legislation and guidance.
Planning Committee	The group of councillors within a local council who hear and decide upon contentious and strategically important planning applications.
Programme Officer	Person appointed to assist with all administrative matters related to Examinations of Local Plan/ development plan documents.
Protected Characteristics	The eight characteristics described by the Equality Act (2010) upon which one may face discrimination (Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation). Public bodies have a duty to prevent and counteract such discrimination.
Qualifying Body	Bodies enabled by the Localism Act (2011) to lead on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, being either a parish or town council, a neighbourhood forum or a community organisation.

Representation	A formal statement/comment submitted by a consultee at consultation stage of a development plan document or local development document.
Section 106 Agreement	A legal agreement between developers, landowners and the Local Planning Authority, setting out the financial and non-financial contributions towards infrastructure likely to be impacted by proposed development
Secretary of State	The government minister in charge of the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG).
Statutory/ Non-Statutory Consultee	A person or body consulted on a planning application, or development plan document. These are either required to be consulted by law (statutory), or consulted on a discretionary basis (non-statutory), based on the nature of the application or plan.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	These documents, including issue-based documents, design guidance and masterplans, provide more detail to how policies in the Local Plan/Development Plan should be used.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA))	A systematic and iterative appraisal process, incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Its purpose is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in a local development document from the outset of the preparation process. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

Appendix C – Relevant Legislation

- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Section 18, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)
- Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Section 110, Localism Act (2011)
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012)
- Regulation 10A, Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012)
- Schedule 4, Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure (England) Order (2015)
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations (2015)
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations (2016)
- Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (known as the Habitats Regulations)
- Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
- The Planning and Infrastructure Bill (2025) (draft)



Dover District Council

Council Offices, White
Cliffs Business Park,
Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ

www.dover.gov.uk