

Statement of Community Involvement 2013

Summary of comments received following consultation (8th January - 5th February 2013)

Summary of comment	Officer response	Respondent
Managing Development - decisions on planning applications.		
Pre- application discussions		
<p>More positive approach required for involving community groups in pre- application consultation events. Guidance for applicants should include a requirement for better publicity for public pre-application consultation events. There should be a specific requirement to engage with amenity groups that might be expected to have an interest in the proposals.</p>	<p>The Council encourages developers to involve the public and community groups before submitting a planning application, however the Council cannot compel them to.</p>	<p>Southampton Parks & Commons Protection Society Graham Linecar</p>
<p>Pre-application consultation by applicant/ developer. The views of the community may not be fairly presented to the Council since the developer is not supervised in his consultation with the community. The supporting evidence presented to the Council may therefore be unrepresentative and not be the majority view of the local community. The local Council require to carry out either an independent enquiry or</p>	<p>To ensure that all interested parties can make their views known directly to the council all planning applications are available on line. The Council carries out its own consultation exercise on every planning application .</p>	<p>Portswood Residents' Gardens CA Richard Buckle</p>

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supervise any such consultation with the community at this stage		
Pre – app discussions on major applications exclude community groups. Amenity/community groups sometimes feel that understandings have been reached on sensitive aspects without input from those groups. When such discussions involve issues that the local community and amenity groups might reasonably be expected to have concerns, they should be given the opportunity to comment to the prospective applicant and the planning officer.	Pre – application meetings are requested and paid for by the developer in order to have an initial exploratory discussion about a proposed development and it is appropriate that these are confidential. To ensure that all interested parties can make a comment on planning applications all applications are available on line. The the Council carries out its own consultation exercise on every planning application and the views received are taken into account in deciding the application.	Southampton Parks & Commons Protection Society Graham Linecar
Inspecting plans		
Drawn plans should be available at Gateway. Plans condensed down so that they can be scanned onto the computer often distort scale, so that any accurate and meaningful assessment of actual measurements of buildings and distances in metres etc cannot be determined. This puts any enquirer at a disadvantage for he is denied accurate information.	PublicAccess has a measuring tool to enable the dimensions of proposals to be accurately measured.	Portswood Residents' Gardens CA Richard Buckle
The web site is currently quite complicated and not user friendly. Some simplification would be helpful.	Agreed The Council will endeavour to improve the planning pages on its website to provide complex information in a	Portswood Residents' Gardens CA

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	way that is easy to understand.	Richard Buckle
On-line information relating to major applications is extremely difficult to use. Consideration should be given to better indexing of on-line applications making it possible for amenity groups to readily identify key documents/plans It is also difficult to read detailed plans on-line even when found.	See previous response.	Southampton Parks & Commons Protection Society Graham Linecar
Being informed		
<p>Being kept up to date on the progress of applications and being made aware of amendments. The Council should commit to inform those who have made representations on an application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if amendments are submitted, and • If reserved matters are submitted, and • When a permission is refused, notification of a new application on the same site. 	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Council endeavours to advise people if significant amendments are made, and to notify people who have previously commented about a reserved matters application and resubmissions.</p>	<p>Southampton Parks & Commons Protection Society Graham Linecar</p>
The Chamber should be informed of planning applications concerning economic development or the business community in general.	<p>Action delivered.</p> <p>The Chamber will be provided with the weekly list of applications received, determined and appeals lodged.</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce Jimmy Chestnutt</p>
Contacting only those neighbours who share a common boundary with the site seems too limiting - 2/3 properties on either side would seem	The standards set out in the SCI are minimum standards. Each application is considered on its merits and, where appropriate, the Council will broaden the consultation to	<p>Portswood Residents' Gardens CA</p>

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more reasonable.	notify other residents. By looking at each application individually the Council can concentrate its finances on notifying the individuals which it considers are likely to be directly affected. All applications can be viewed on line and interested parties are encouraged to make their views known.	Richard Buckle
Other		
A panel of independent architects (in private practice, rather than council employees) should be asked for their opinion as to the visual appropriateness and scale of any proposed development and whether it obeys existing building lines and whether it fits in with the existing local architecture. This has been the case in the past and if not so at the present time may it be re-instated.	Agreed The Council will continue to consult an Architects' Panel comprised of people who are not Council employees.	Portwood Residents' Gardens CA Richard Buckle
In the light of the government's intention to allow conversion of offices to residential uses without needing planning permission the Chamber should be alerted to such instances of conversion in order to submit views and influence decisions.	If the government's proposals go through then the conversions would not require planning permission and consequently the Council would not be aware of them	Chamber of Commerce Jimmy Chestnutt

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Planning Policy		
Inspecting documents		
<p>Planning policy documents need to be made available in printed form to make it easier to cross refer between sections.</p>	<p>Agreed At the key consultation stages paper copies of the plans are available for inspection at public libraries and Council Housing offices and Gateway</p>	<p>Southampton Parks & Commons Protection Society Graham Linecar</p>
Feedback on comments made at public consultation		
<p>For major policy documents, the publication of representations and responses should be a separate step before progressing to the next stage of the document.</p>	<p>Before approving the final draft plan for formal consultation the Council is required to consider the representations received during the initial consultation stage and the actions taken in response. Current practice is that a summary of representations is prepared and this is considered and endorsed by Cabinet at the same meeting that it considers the final draft plan. The response to the representations received is published as part of the Cabinet papers just before the Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Introducing a separate step would increase the time between publication of the Council's response to representations and start the final stage of public consultation. It would therefore extend the timeframe for producing the plan. Since people can make their views</p>	<p>Southampton Parks & Commons Protection Society Graham Linecar</p>

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	known during the following consultation stage, the benefit of giving people more time to consider the council's response does not outweigh the disadvantage.	
There would seem to be an undue delay in publishing feedback which would not be available before any meeting to approve the plan.	<p>Comments received early in the process will be considered and reflected in the early drafts of the plan when appropriate. A summary of the comments together with the Council response will be made publicly available as part of the Cabinet report when the final draft plan is considered by the Council.</p> <p>Comments received during the final consultation period (on the final draft plan) will be summarised, together with the Council's response, and will be publicly available when the plan is submitted for examination by an independent Inspector.</p> <p>All comments are therefore publicly available before the plan is approved.</p>	<p>Portswood Residents' Gardens CA Richard Buckle</p>
Early consultation required		
Consultation is required at an early stage so that relevant views could be incorporated into the draft plan; instead of awaiting such views after the draft plan has been published.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Formal consultation is undertaken both at the start of the plan and on the final draft plan, as well as informal consultation whilst the plan is being written.</p>	<p>Portswood Residents' Gardens CA Richard Buckle</p>

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Length of consultation		
<p>Could you let me know the rationale behind the decision not to follow the Compact recommendation of a 12 week minimum consultation period.</p>	<p>The process for preparing new plans is set down by statute and has 2 main opportunities for groups and individuals to get involved – at the commencement of the plan and at the final draft plan stage. Each of these formal consultation periods last 6 weeks. In addition the Council will welcome discussions with interested groups up until the final draft plan has been prepared. This will generally include consulting on an initial draft plan for 6 weeks. It is therefore considered that interested groups have significant opportunities to influence the plan without making each formal consultation stage last 12 weeks and thus extending the timescale for the plans' preparation.</p>	<p>North West Bassett Residents Association Bob Merritt</p>
Other		
<p>We are pleased to see the draft statement on consulting the community on planning matters and generally we have no views or suggestions to add.</p> <p>It is however rather disappointing, but entirely predictable, that there would be a "get out" clause for the council at the beginning of the document, which seems to negate the whole point of the initiative.</p>	<p>The statement referred to is set out below. Whilst the Council commits to the approach set out in the document for the vast majority of planning matters, there may be circumstances when it is either not possible or sensible to do so and this wording provides the necessary flexibility.</p> <p><i>Whilst Southampton City Council will use its best endeavours to adhere to the approach and commitments set out in this document there may be circumstances when complete adherence is not possible. If this</i></p>	<p>Mr & Mrs Wake</p>

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	<i>happens the council will provide an explanation, if one is requested.</i>	
The Chamber should be informed of plans concerning economic development or the business community in general.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Chamber is included in the list of “General Consultation Bodies” that the local authority will consult on plans which it considers concern economic development or the business community.</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce Jimmy Chestnutt</p>
Welcome and support this initiative by the Council to encourage and facilitate the involvement of the local community in planning and related developments affecting their neighbourhood.	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Portswood Residents’ Gardens Conservation Area Tom O’Connor</p>