

Planning Southampton to 2026

Southampton City Council

Statement of Community Involvement

Adopted April 2013



“..planning decisions directly affect our surroundings and therefore all our lives.”

The Planning Pack 2012, RTPI & Planning Aid.

For up to date information visit the Council’s planning web pages -
Making plans: www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/policy/
Taking decisions: www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/planning/



The approach set out in this document will be subject to change as and when the legal requirements change.

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 happens the council will provide an explanation, if one is requested.

Southampton City Council is the local planning authority for the city and has responsibility for planning matters. This Statement of Community Involvement sets out how and when the council will seek the views of local people, businesses and key organisations on local planning matters.

The planning system

“The planning system in the UK manages the use and development of land and buildings. The aim of the system is to create better places for people to live, work and play in. It is how we as a society strike a balance between allowing development of land and buildings to support economic development, and provide the things we need (like homes, jobs, shops and transport), and improving and conserving public spaces, heritage, amenities and the environment, and help to tackle climate change.”

The Handy Guide to Planning 2012; RTP1, Planning Aid & Urban Forum – see further information section.

There are two main areas of planning:

◆ **Planning policy – making plans**

These plans (known as local development documents) explain how an area will change over time (usually 15 – 20 years) and, particularly, what can be built and where.

◆ **Managing development – taking decisions on planning applications**

The plans described above are used to guide decisions as to whether individual planning applications are approved or refused.

Principles for consultation

The council aims to give the whole community the opportunity to influence the content of the plans for future development in the city, and to give people affected by specific development proposals the chance to comment on individual planning applications when they are submitted by landowners or developers. It will do this by:

- ◆ publicising, on the council’s web pages, which planning applications have been received, and when the closing date for comments is.
- ◆ publicising, on the council’s web pages, which plans are being prepared and, particularly, when there are time limited opportunities to comment.
- ◆ providing clear, succinct information on the web pages to help people to make informed comments
- ◆ giving full consideration to all suggestions and comments made.

People can view the council’s web pages on line at libraries across the city where the staff are on hand to help if required.

In addition when preparing new plans we will:

- ◆ use appropriate consultation methods which are meaningful and proportionate to the document in preparation, whilst aiming to encourage involvement from a broad range of respondents, including groups who seldom make comments
- ◆ seek the views of interested parties as early as possible and sensible to enable them to influence the content and focus of the plan, and identify local issues and opportunities.

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- ◆ encourage ongoing involvement throughout the preparation of plans including commenting on the issues, the alternative approaches available, and the detailed wording of the proposed policies.
 - ◆ make consultation documents as clear and concise as possible (minimising the use of jargon) without oversimplifying complex issues.
 - ◆ provide feedback on how the ideas and comments received within the consultation period have influenced the content and shape of the plan.

The Statement of Community Involvement is a flexible framework which allows different approaches to consultation so as to respond to the individual circumstances at the time – including the nature of the plan being prepared, the potential issues involved, and the needs and preferences of the communities, groups and organisations likely to be affected.

This Statement of Community Involvement reflects the local Compact agreed between statutory agencies and their voluntary and community partners. However, whilst the Compact recommends a formal consultation period of a minimum of 12 weeks, this Statement follows the requirements in the Planning Acts - a minimum of 6 weeks for formal consultation together with more informal ongoing consultation during the preparation of the plan.

The preparation of a Statement of Community Involvement is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This document has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.

Planning Policy - Making plans

What sorts of plans will we consult on?

Development Plan Documents

The legal term for plans which set down policies about which types of land uses are acceptable in what locations. They also set out the key requirements that new development must comply with. The plans generally look forward 15-20 years.

Supplementary Planning Documents

These documents add further detail to the policies established in Development Plan Documents. They can be used to provide further guidance for development, for example design guidance, but they cannot be used to set down new policy.

Sustainability Appraisal

This is required for each Development Plan Document, and for some Supplementary Planning Documents. It looks at the environmental, social and economic effects of a plan to make sure that the plan promotes sustainable development, and that the plan takes the most appropriate approach given the reasonable alternatives. It is published alongside the plan to which it relates at certain stages in the plan's preparations.

Other planning documents

These could include non – statutory site briefs or master plans prepared by (or for) the Council. It will also include documents associated with Neighbourhood Planning as follows:

- ◆ applications for the designation of a neighbourhood area and for a neighbourhood forum
- ◆ a neighbourhood plan submitted by a neighbourhood forum in relation to a neighbourhood area.

When we will consult

At any given time the Council is likely to be working on a number of different plans. A list of the emerging and planned Development Plan Documents is included in the Council's **Local Development Scheme** which can be viewed on the Council's planning policy web pages. This explains when significant consultation stages are programmed which is when we expect to receive the majority of written comments. However, comments are encouraged throughout the preparation of the document until the end of the last consultation period. See over for a diagram showing the key stages.

Neighbourhood Planning

- ◆ The council will seek views on applications for the designation of a neighbourhood area and for a neighbourhood forum
- ◆ The council will seek views on a proposal for a neighbourhood plan submitted by a neighbourhood forum in relation to a neighbourhood area.

Key stages in the preparation of planning documents

DPD		SPD
✓	Evidence gathering and ongoing engagement Collecting views, ideas and information. Highlight needs and issues Discuss alternative approaches. Collect views about the proposed scope of the Sustainability Appraisal.	✓
✓	Prepare draft plan based on evidence and views collected. Comments received and the responses will be summarised and made available See note below	✓
✓	Consultation on draft plan (also known as Proposed Submission document) 6 week period* for Development Plan Documents. Sustainability Appraisal report also available for comment. 4 week period* for Supplementary Planning Documents	✓
✓	Submission of the plan for Examination Background evidence and all comments received will be sent on to the independent Inspector for consideration as part of the Examination	
✓	Examination held in public to discuss the soundness of the plan before an independent Inspector People who raise objections to the plan at the draft plan stage may be asked to submit further evidence and may also be asked if they want to present their objection in person to the Inspector and engage in debate about their points.	
✓	Adoption by the Council of a Development Plan Document which the Inspector has found sound; or for a Supplementary Planning Document after comments have been considered and appropriate changes made.	✓

* or a period as prescribed by legal requirements at the time

DPD = Development Plan Document

SPD = Supplementary Planning Document

Periods of engagement and consultation are shaded.

Note - Depending on the subject matter of the plan there may be additional organised opportunities for people to make comments between the initial engagement phase and the publishing of the draft plan.

Information is available throughout the process by visiting the Council's web pages.

How we will communicate and consult

Planning law and national guidance lays down requirements as to how and when consultation will be undertaken and also who must be consulted. Outside this legal requirement we will choose consultation methods appropriate to the document in preparation by balancing cost and time constraints with the likely relevance of the plan to specific communities and/or organisations.

The Council's planning policy web pages are the primary source of information on planning policy documents. All consultations on plans and applications for designation for neighbourhood areas and neighbourhood forums will be announced through these web pages.

In addition to this the council will choose from a range of techniques as appropriate, including;

Information giving

- ◆ Notices in local and community newspapers and publicly accessible council offices
- ◆ Email bulletins
- ◆ Leaflets

Involvement in the preparation of plans

- ◆ Meetings or workshops with existing groups and forums.
- ◆ Exhibitions
- ◆ Using an independent facilitator such as Planning Aid to encourage discussion of specific plans or topics, or investigating alternative options.

Seeking comments on draft documents

- ◆ Making consultation documents available in locations such as libraries and publicly accessible council offices – *see the web pages for a list of such locations*
- ◆ Direct contact with relevant groups, organisations and individuals by Email or by letter.

Who we will consult

Anyone may make comments on the plans whether or not they have received a specific letter or email inviting them to comment.

In addition, there are different types of organisations, groups, residents and businesses who we may specifically invite to take part in discussions in the early stages of plan preparation because we consider that they may have an interest in the area (such as ownership of a key site) or in the subject matter of the plan in preparation. See Appendix 1.

What happens to the comments received?

All comments will be fully considered and changes made to the plan when appropriate. We may contact the person or organisation who made comments in order to discuss their views and suggestions.

The council has a duty to balance individual comments made against other comments received, existing evidence, legal requirements, other local and national policies, needs and interests. Consequently, there will be circumstances where the council considers that it is not appropriate to alter the plan to accommodate the views of a respondent. In this eventuality, and where the plan is a Development Plan Document, the respondent will have the opportunity to put his/her views to the independent planning inspector who holds the public Examination into the soundness of the plan.

Comments made during the development of a plan will be taken into account before the next version of the plan is published for consultation. However, only written comments that are submitted within the specified final consultation period will be considered by the Inspector (for a Development Plan Document) or by councillors in making the decision whether or not to adopt a Supplementary Planning Document.

All written comments on plans received within the consultation period will be

- ◆ recorded and their receipt acknowledged within 15 working days.
- ◆ made available for others to see. Representations cannot be treated in confidence, however, personal information will not be publicly available, in order to comply with the Data Protection Act.
- ◆ sent to the Planning Inspector for consideration at the Examination (for those comments received at the draft plan stage for Development Plan Documents only).
- ◆ included in a summary of the main points raised which will also be sent to the Planning Inspector (Development Plan Documents only).
- ◆ included in a summary of the main issues raised with an explanation of how the issues have been addressed in the final Supplementary Planning Document. This summary will be considered by the council's Cabinet before a decision is taken as to whether or not to adopt the document.

We will provide feedback on the comments received within the consultation period and the actions taken in response to those comments. A report summarising the comments made and the council's response to the comments, will be made available on the Council's Planning Policy web pages. Since each comment has to be read, recorded, considered, and the response endorsed by councillors there may be a time delay of several months before the report is made available on the website.

Managing development – taking decisions on planning applications

Most people become involved in the planning system when an application for development is submitted that may have an effect on their property or area, and they want their views to be taken into account when the application is decided.

The council's Development Management Team is responsible for the processing of most planning applications within Southampton. There are two distinct stages when local people can become involved:

- ◆ **Pre – application consultation** carried out by the applicant / developer before they submit the application
- ◆ **Consultation on the planning application** carried out by the council once it has been submitted with the necessary information.

Pre – application consultation (by the developers/applicants)

For applications which are likely to have a significant impact on the wider community developers are encouraged to engage with the local community before submitting the application.

In particular, the council encourages developers running pre-application consultation to:

- ◆ Agree the consultation approach with the council, including considering what is required to involve seldom heard groups or groups that will particularly be affected by the changes
- ◆ Inform local people about the details of the scheme and be clear what elements can be influenced by making comments.
- ◆ Clearly identify any changes made as a result of comments based on sound planning reasons.
- ◆ Submit a statement with the planning application outlining the community involvement that has been carried out, the comment received and any changes made as a result.

Key stages for planning applications

Pre – application consultation - consultation by developers/applicants

AGREE PROCESS of involvement with the council

CONSULT with local people and organisations, including Council teams and other organisations.

CONSIDER. Developer produces a report on how they undertook the consultation, what issues were raised, and how the issues have been addressed in the application.

Developer submits the application together with the report of consultation and other supporting information.

The council checks that all information has been supplied, registers the application and includes details on PublicAccess.

Planning application consultation - by the Council For ALL planning applications

CONSULT. A valid application is publicised e.g. by PublicAccess, letter, site notice (as appropriate).

Comments must be made in writing and must be received within 21 days

CONSIDER. Council assesses the application and takes into account legal requirements and all material considerations - including all comments made.

If new issues arise there may be an additional 14 days to comments on the changes.

DECIDE. Decisions on smaller, non-controversial applications are made by the Planning & Development Manager.

Decisions on other applications are made by councillors (the Planning & Rights of Way Panel). The meeting is open to the public and people may speak with the consent of the chair.

INFORM. Council informs interested parties of the decision

Planning application consultation (by the council)

What sorts of applications will we consult on?

Planning applications range from householder extensions to proposals for larger schemes such as new shopping centres, offices and housing developments. The erection of new buildings, and, sometimes, changing what an existing building is used for (e.g. using a house for a pub) is likely to require planning permission. If planning permission is required the landowner or developer must submit a planning application to the council's Development Management team. We will consult affected people and organisations on applications received under the Town & Country Planning Acts. Whilst requests for Certificates of Existing Lawful Use or Development are not planning applications as such we will consult on these requests as appropriate.

For information about when planning permission is required visit the council's web pages.

When, who and how we will consult

The requirements for advertising and consulting on planning applications are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. This sets out that **people have 21 days to submit written comments** which can be by letter, email, or via PublicAccess – see the next section.

When a planning application is received by the Council it is checked to make sure that all the necessary information has been supplied. Once it is accepted as a valid application and is registered as such the assessment of the merits of the application will commence. This assessment includes consultation, which may include:

- ◆ consulting (via letter or email) specialist organisations such as the Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Natural England, utility providers to establish as to whether the proposals have an impact on the specialist concerns of the organisation.
- ◆ consulting (via email) other council teams such as conservation officers, highways officers, planning policy officers, ecologist to establish whether the proposals would be contrary to current policy or would have an unacceptable impact on other important aspects of city life.
- ◆ consulting with neighbours. A notification letter is sent to neighbouring properties that share a common boundary with the application site.
- ◆ consulting with the wider community through
 - Making applications available through PublicAccess
 - Using site notices as appropriate
 - Informing residents associations of applications in their area if they have asked to be notified.

Some planning applications such as applications concerning conservation areas, listed buildings, those that conflict with the policies of the adopted Local Plan, major applications and those that affect a Right of Way are also advertised in a local newspaper.

A duty planning officer service operates from Gateway at One Guildhall Square in the city centre. The duty planner will be available to give **informal** planning advice in person, on the telephone or by email. An appointment will be necessary to speak to the duty planner in person.

Making comments on a planning application

You can comment on or object to any planning application, even if you haven't received a letter notifying you of the application. Comments must be made in writing direct to the Council (by letter or email) or online through 'PublicAccess'.

Applications can be viewed through our online planning database “PublicAccess”. You can also view planning applications in person at the council’s **Gateway one stop shop** located at Number one Guildhall Square in the city centre, by prior arrangement.

Email comments should be sent to planning@southampton.gov.uk

Letters should be sent to: Development Management Team, Planning Transport & Sustainability Division, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LS

or visit PublicAccess at www.southampton.gov.uk/planning

For more detailed advice on how to comment on a planning application, please visit the Council web pages at: www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/planning/applications/default.aspx

What happens to the comments received?

All written responses received are acknowledged and then taken into account in deciding whether or not permission should be granted. However, the Council will not enter into a written exchange of correspondence with an objector to a planning application.

Decisions on planning applications are taken by the Planning & Development Manager or by the Councillors who are members of the council’s Planning & Rights of Way Panel. The applications that are considered by the Panel include those that conflict with established planning policy; applications which have attracted at least 5 written objections and the ward councillor has requested that the application be considered by the Panel; major applications where at least 1 objection has been received and where it is in the wider interest that an application is considered by elected councillors.

Meetings of the Planning & Rights of Way Panel

Planning applications which are large or complex, controversial or have many objectors are considered by the Panel. Whilst the meeting is open for the public to attend, individual members of the public may only speak with the consent of the Chair. Speaking time for individuals will be limited. For more detail on how the panel meetings are run please see the Council’s Planning Services web pages at

www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/PROW%20info%20for%20speakers_tcm46-228732.pdf

Objectors and supporters of a particular planning application can follow the progress of the application through PublicAccess. The Council will notify objectors to a planning application if that application is intended to be considered by the Panel. Panel papers will be available to view on the council’s web pages 5 days before the panel meeting. Click through “Your Council” then “Committees” then “Committee structure” and select Planning and Rights of Way Panel or use the following address:

www.southampton.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=143

The minutes of the Panel meetings are also available to view at the above web address. The Council does not notify individual objectors of the Panel’s decision.

After a decision is made

If an application has been refused and the applicant is not satisfied with this outcome the applicant can lodge an appeal. The appeal will be determined by an independent Inspector. Members of the public who commented on the application will be notified in writing by the council that an appeal has been lodged.

Once planning permission has been granted there is no statutory right of appeal to challenge the approval. The only mechanism for objectors to challenge the granting of planning permission is through a judicial review upon a point of law. It is therefore important that anyone wishing to make comment on or object to a particular development proposal should do so at the application stage.

Contacts and further information

Contact information

Planning Policy Team, Southampton City Council
Email: City.plan@southampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 023 8083 3919

Development Management Team, Southampton City council
Email: planning@southampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 023 8083 3006

Further information

For advice on making plans

Southampton City Council, Planning policy web pages
www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/policy/default.aspx

For advice on planning applications

Southampton City Council, Planning applications web pages
www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/planning/default.aspx

PublicAccess
www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/planning/applications/

To book an appointment to view planning applications at the Gateway One Stop Shop,
One Guildhall Square, SO14 7FP
Telephone: 023 80 8083 3000
Gateway one stop shop

For general advice on planning

The Planning Portal is the UK Government's online planning and building regulations resource for England and Wales and also provides advice and services for the public and professionals

www.planningportal.gov.uk

Planning Aid England provides free, independent and professional planning advice to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay professional fees.

www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/

To view the Southampton Compact

Southampton Connect

The Southampton Compact between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector

www.southampton-connect.com/

Appendix 1

Plan making - Types of consultees

The following list of consultees is as specified by the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and is provided for information. In practical terms the organisations that will be invited to comment on emerging plans will reflect the statutory requirements in force at the time and the nature of the plan being prepared.

At each consultation stage of a Development Plan Document the Council will notify the organisations and individuals within the following 3 groups which it considers may have an interest in the subject of the proposed local plan.

- ◆ specific consultation bodies
- ◆ general consultation bodies
- ◆ residents or other persons carrying on business in the area

Specific consultation bodies include:

- ◆ The Environment Agency, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage), the Marine Management Organisation, Natural England, Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (company number 2904587), the Highways Agency; the Homes and Communities Agency.
- ◆ Adjoining local authorities and Parish Councils
- ◆ Hampshire police and crime commissioner
- ◆ Utilities providers- e.g. electronic communications; electricity; gas; sewerage; water suppliers.
- ◆ Primary Care Trust

General consultation bodies include:

- ◆ **voluntary bodies** some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area
- ◆ bodies which represent the interests of different **racial, ethnic or national groups** in the local planning authority's area,
- ◆ bodies which represent the interests of different **religious groups** in the local planning authority's area,
- ◆ bodies which represent the interests of **disabled persons** in the local planning authority's area
- ◆ bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on **business** in the local planning authority's area

Residents and local businesses include

- ◆ Residents associations
- ◆ Other Area - based groups (e.g. churches, local voluntary groups)
- ◆ Individual businesses and residents

If you would like this document sent to you in another format or language, please contact the Planning Policy Team at Southampton City Council 023 8083 3919.

www.southampton.gov.uk