

# Statement of Community Involvement

1<sup>st</sup> Revision

December 2010



Planning for a Better Watford

This document can be made available in alternative formats including large print. The council also has staff who can verbally translate the document into a range of other languages. Please contact us on tel: 01923 226400 for more information.

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## **(1) Introduction**

Planning affects us all. It helps create the places we live, work and play in.

As your local planning authority, Watford Borough Council has the job of planning for the needs of a changing population, providing suitable locations for housing, employment and leisure activities, whilst protecting the environment and those parts of the town with historic or heritage value.

Agreeing the best way to do this can be difficult, requiring tough decisions about priorities. Today, planning is a process where everyone should have the chance to be involved in shaping the town's future.

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how you can be involved.

This Statement updates and reviews the SCI adopted in 2006. We have looked at how well the methods we set out in 2006 have worked. We have also thought about, and sought views on, what new ways might be more effective, particularly for involving those people who tend not to get involved in planning issues.

### **(1.1) Consultation on this review:**

We asked people how they would prefer to be consulted. This was done in July 2010 at our town centre 'consultation shop' which showcased a number of major regeneration projects in Watford. A survey was also made available on our website and linked via the social networking site Facebook.

Over 270 questionnaires or comments were received, showing that the Council magazine, About Watford, is by far the most popular way of finding out about local planning issues, with exhibitions and roadshows, the Council website, and direct contact by letter or email also popular.

Responding to surveys, either online or by post was the most popular way of getting involved in developing policy, with attending discussion groups also scoring highly.

Council meetings such as neighbourhood forums, and use of social networking sites were identified by over 10% of respondents. Visits to groups by the mayor, councillors or officers and use of social networking sites were less favoured, but still scored over 10% each.

This information was used to produce a draft revision which was published for comment from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October to Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

Comments received during that time were supportive and suggested no further changes.

### **(1.2) Document coverage**

Planning activity broadly falls into two categories, which are covered separately in this document:

- **Planning policy:** This includes developing long term strategy and specific policies to guide future development and to develop or conserve particular sites or areas.

- **Development management:** This includes assessing individual planning applications against planning strategy and policies.

## **(2) Planning policy - The Local Development Framework**

### **(2.1) An overview:**

We are currently working to replace the Watford District Plan 2000 with a **Local Development Framework**. This approach was introduced by the last Government and is so far being continued by the coalition government.

There are three types of document in a Local Development Framework:

**1. Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** – these set out the spatial strategy and policy against which planning applications are considered. At the moment we are working on the Core Strategy DPD, which sets out the long term vision and strategy for the town and how it will be delivered. We also intend to produce a:

- site allocations DPD, which will allocate sites for particular uses
- development management DPD, which will set out more detailed policies for use in determining planning applications; and a
- Town Centre Area Action Plan.

All policies will be illustrated on a proposals map.

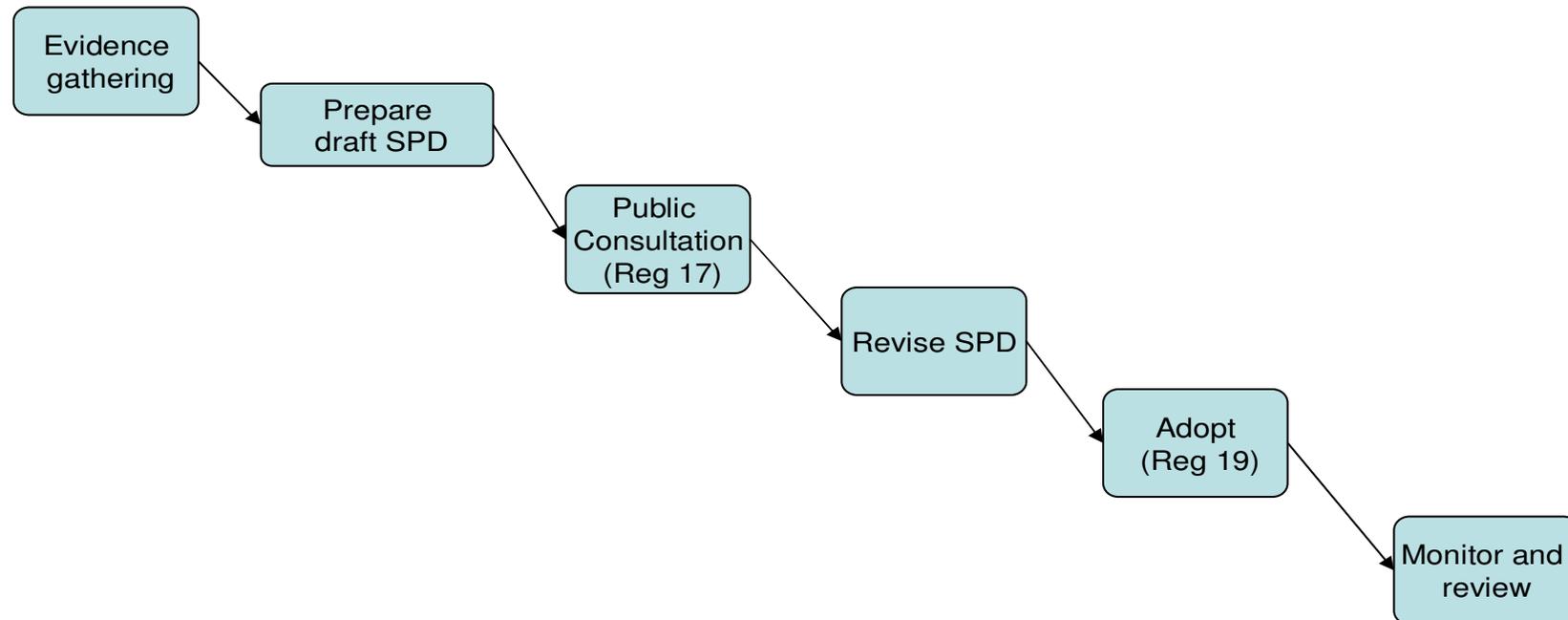
**2. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - these provide further detail on DPD strategy and policies. We have already produced a residential design guide SPD, and planning briefs for the redevelopment of Charter Place and Watford Junction redevelopment. Others will be prepared as needed.

### **3. Other supporting documents:**

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - sets out how we will involve the community.
- **Sustainability appraisal/Strategic environmental assessment** – An assessment of the social, environmental and economic effects of every Development Plan Document. Consulted upon at key stages.
- **Annual Monitoring Report** – provides information and data about Watford, and assesses our performance against current plans. This helps identify when policies may need to be reviewed or further action taken to make progress.
- **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** – sets out a timetable for what documents to produce and by when.



# Process of preparing a supplementary planning document



### **(3) Our approach to consultation**

#### **(3.1) Information, consultation and involvement**

There are three levels on which we will communicate with all those interested in planning Watford's future:

**Information:** Providing you with information about what we are doing, and the results of research.

**Consultation:** Asking for your views and feeding back. This will take place at key stages such as where a draft document has been produced.

**Involvement:** Before a draft document is produced, providing the opportunity to influence what goes into the document, and what the document covers.

#### **(3.2) Who will we involve, and how?**

In order to make the planning process in Watford as inclusive and as representative as possible we aim to use a variety of techniques within the time and resources that we have available.

Regulations specify organisations that we must consult with (called specific consultation bodies) at particular stages and those we may choose to consult with (called general consultation bodies). Lists of these bodies are given in Appendix A.

We also keep an extensive list of consultees, many of whom have specifically asked to be kept informed. More information on this is set out in 3.5 below where we explain how you can register an interest.

Consultation extends beyond this list with the aim of giving everyone with an interest the opportunity to influence planning policies. More information on the approaches we will use is set out in Tables at 3.7 and 3.8 below. We will consider using organisations such as Planning Aid to assist in consultation events.

#### **(3.3) Groups or individuals who don't generally get involved**

A lot of interest and involvement in planning policy in Watford tends to come from organisations with a professional interest, such as developers, planning firms, specific consultation bodies. Local residents who become involved, either as individuals or as part of local groups, are relatively few and are often of, or towards, retirement age.

We want to broaden the level of interest and particularly get younger and working age people involved, from all parts of Watford's diverse community. This requires consulting in a variety of ways and at different times.

We need to make involvement more convenient and we need to be more innovative, within the capacity of our limited resources. Online consultations give people the opportunity to get involved at a time convenient to them, but are not suitable for everyone. Where we hold events and exhibitions we need to make sure they are in an accessible location and that exhibition opening hours extend into the evening and weekends.

Case Study: One of our planning officers visited gypsy and traveller households individually to discuss future provision for their needs – this was an effective approach because they were not all able to read the information sent, and were not all comfortable discussing issues as a group.

### **(3.4) Standards for communication and consultation**

We will:

- only use accessible venues for meetings and exhibitions
- extend public exhibition opening hours into the evening or weekend
- use a variety of consultation methods and media to ensure that those who want to be involved, are involved.
- where possible, link our consultation to other council/community activities being organised
- write in plain English and promote the availability of electronic, large print and translations where appropriate
- ensure all communications provide contact details for feedback and questions
- give clear deadlines and contacts for responses for all consultation material
- provide a freepost address for all written consultation
- publish summaries and key points from all consultation on the council's website, and where publication dates allow, in the council's magazine
- feed the results of related consultation into the production of all our development plan documents.

### **(3.5) Managing stakeholder details**

Since 2008 we have been using an online consultation tool called Limehouse to manage policy consultation. We currently have details of over 1200 interested parties who are notified when major consultation exercises take place for the Local Development Framework, and who can comment directly online.

If you would like to be added to the consultee list for the Local Development Framework, or to update your details, you can do this online at: <http://ldf.watford.gov.uk> or contact:

Planning Policy, Watford Borough Council, FREEPOST ANG0394, Town Hall, Watford, WD17 3EX, tel: 01923 278263 or email: [strategy@watford.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@watford.gov.uk)

Where we have your details on our databases for consultation purposes, we will not give them out to anyone else, and only use them to contact you regarding planning policy matters.

### **(3.6) What will happen to your views and comments?**

- All written comments made at Reg 17 stage (for SPDs) and Reg 27 stage (for DPDs) (i.e. pre-submission consultation) will be publicly available, along with the names of those who gave them.
- A record will be kept of comments received, noting which have led to revisions; and, where appropriate, explaining why any suggestions have not been taken up.
- A summary of issues raised in consultation will be published.

### (3.7) How and when we will involve you - DPDs

The table below sets out the stages and minimum consultation which local councils must follow for producing Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Details of the specific and general consultation bodies can be found in Appendix A. The preparation stages are also illustrated in the diagram at 2.2 above.

Stage of plan preparation	To comply with current regulations <sup>1</sup> we will:
Public Participation in the Preparation of a Development Plan Document (Reg 25)	<p>Tell those specific consultation bodies we think may be interested in the proposed DPD; and those general consultation bodies we think appropriate; what we are preparing a DPD about and ask them what the DPD ought to contain (Specific and general consultation bodies are explained at Appendix A).</p> <p>Consider whether it is appropriate to invite comments from people who live or conduct business in the area; and if so make arrangement for this.</p> <p>In preparing the DPD, we must take into account any comments made.</p>
Publication of a Development Plan Document (Reg 27) [for six weeks Pre-submission consultation]	<p>Make a copy of each of the proposed submission documents<sup>2</sup> and a statement of the representations procedure available for inspection during normal office hours at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) our main office (the Town Hall Customer Service Centre)</li> <li>ii) other places we consider appropriate. This will include Watford Central Library and North Watford Library.</li> </ul> <p>Publish the same on our website (<a href="http://www.watford.gov.uk/ldf">www.watford.gov.uk/ldf</a>), along with details of when and where the documents can be inspected.</p> <p>Place a local advert detailing when and where the documents can be inspected, and the</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended 2008 and 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Submission documents include: the proposed DPD; where applicable a proposals map showing changes to the adopted proposals map; the sustainability appraisal report; a statement summarising consultation undertaken, representations made and how they have been addressed; and any relevant supporting documents.

	<p>representations procedure.</p> <p>Send each of the specific consultation bodies asked to comment under regulation 25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) a copy of each of the proposed submission documents; and</li> <li>ii) a statement of the representations procedure;</li> </ul> <p>Send each of the general consultation bodies asked to comment under regulation 25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) a statement of the representations procedure, and</li> <li>ii) a statement of the fact that the proposed submission documents are available for inspection and of the places and times in which they can be inspected.</li> </ul>
Public examination (Reg 34)	<p>At least six weeks before the examination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Give notice by local advertisement - usually in the Watford Observer.</li> <li>b) Publish details on our website (<a href="http://www.watford.gov.uk/ldf">www.watford.gov.uk/ldf</a>).</li> <li>c) Notify people who made representations when the examination starts and the name of the appointed Inspector.</li> </ul>
Adoption (Reg 36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Make the adopted document, adoption statement, Final Sustainability Report and Inspector's Report available for inspection (this will be at the Town Hall Customer Service Centre and on our website).</li> <li>b) Give notice by local advertisement - usually in the Watford Observer.</li> <li>c) Notify anyone who asked to be notified of adoption.</li> </ul>

As well as complying with the regulations we will inform, consult and involve people further as set out below. Consultation may not be limited to that listed below – consideration will be given to the most effective way of informing and consulting people for each DPD.

Stage in document preparation	Additional consultation - who	How
Developing the Evidence Base (Part of Reg 25 stage)	In developing the evidence base we will focus on involving groups with particular expertise in each issue.	Discussions with representative groups including experts in the subject of the evidence. Reports to Planning Policy Advisory Group (of elected members). Evidence published on council website as it is completed.
Identifying issues, options, preferred approach (Part of Reg 25 Stage)	This part of the process is no longer a single consultation stage but part of an ongoing dialogue with interested parties. The detail will vary according to the DPD but we will aim to give everyone with an interest the opportunity to comment at some point.	Discussions and workshops with representative groups. Articles in About Watford Reports to Planning Policy Advisory Group (of elected members). Reports to the Local Strategic Partnership (One Watford). Online discussion forums/surveys, including use of social networking sites. Public exhibition with questionnaire. Regular progress updates on the Council website.
Publication of a Development Plan Document (Reg 27)	At this stage we will notify everyone on our consultation database to advise them that pre-submission consultation is taking place.  It should be noted that at this stage representations must relate to the “soundness” of the document – guidance on the representations procedure will explain what this means.	Letter or email to all consultees. Article in About Watford.
Examination (Reg 34)	No additional consultation.	
Adoption (Reg 36)	No additional consultation.	

### (3.8) How and when we will involve you - Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are not subject to independent examination but Councils are expected to consult with the community before adopting them.

Stage	Minimum required to comply with current regulations	Additional consultation
Evidence gathering	No specific requirements.	The level and nature of consultation will be determined for each SPD, depending on the content.
Prepare draft SPD	No specific requirements.	
Public consultation (Reg 17)	SPD documents to be made available for inspection at the Town Hall and other appropriate places (usually Central and North Watford libraries) during normal office hours and published on the council's website. This information to be advertised in the local press. Copies of the SPD documents to be sent to the specific consultation bodies we think are affected by the SPD, and such of the general consultation bodies as we think appropriate. Consultation period between four and six weeks.	Depending on the scope of the SPD, we may contact everyone on our consultee list to alert them to the consultation.  If timing allows there may also be an article in About Watford, the council magazine.
Revise SPD	Produce a statement summarising the representations made during public consultation and how they have been addressed.	
Adopt	Publish the SPD along with an adoption statement and the statement of representations described above. These to be available on our website and at the places where it was available during consultation. Anyone who has specifically asked to be notified will be sent the adoptions statement.	Nothing additional.
Monitor and review	No specific requirements.	

#### **(4) Watford's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)**

Watford's Local Strategic Partnership, One Watford, is made up of representatives from all sectors of the Watford community, including district and county councils, social and health care services, the police, the voluntary sector, education and commerce sectors.

The organisations that currently make up One Watford are:

- Watford Borough Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Police Authority
- John Lewis Watford
- Safer Watford partnership
- Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce
- Watford Community Housing Trust
- Watford Council for Voluntary Services
- Watford District Children's Trust Partnership
- Watford Football Club
- Watford Observer
- Wenta
- West Hertfordshire NHS Primary Care Trust
- West Herts College

The partnership oversees the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), ensuring all agencies and organisations work together to deliver the following shared vision:

**A town to be proud of, where people will always choose to live, work and visit.**

The objectives are:

- A well planned town with homes to suit all needs
- A well informed community where everyone can contribute
- A healthy town
- A prosperous and educated town
- A town that protects its environment and heritage
- A safer town

**Watford's Local Development Framework** is a mechanism for delivering these objectives, helping to shape the future of Watford, as a town where we live, work and spend our leisure time.

Ideally consultation on the Local Development Framework and the Sustainable Community Strategy should be undertaken jointly, using a shared evidence base. Given different timescales and processes this has not generally proved possible but we are working to share information more effectively and work more cooperatively. We will keep the LSP informed and involved in LDF preparation by circulating reports or attending meetings at key stages and by inviting them to participate in events such as workshops.

The Council shares the same vision but has recently amended its objectives, which remain compatible with those set out above:

- Improve the health of the town and enhance its heritage.
- Enhance the town's 'clean and green' environment.
- Enhance the town's sustainability.
- Enhance the town's economic prosperity and potential.
- Supporting individuals and the community.
- Influence and partnership delivery.

## **(5) Planning applications**

### **(5.1) Types of planning applications**

Planning applications fall into two broad categories: those that are classed as 'minor' which encompass the majority of day to day applications for works to commercial premises and homes, and those classed as 'major' because of their size or possible impacts.

#### **Minor planning applications<sup>3</sup>**

These may be submitted by any individual or business, and can cover a wide range of proposals including:

- an extension or alteration to a building
- converting an existing building to a different type of use
- new shop fronts and signs on business premises
- works to listed buildings or protected trees.

#### **Major planning applications**

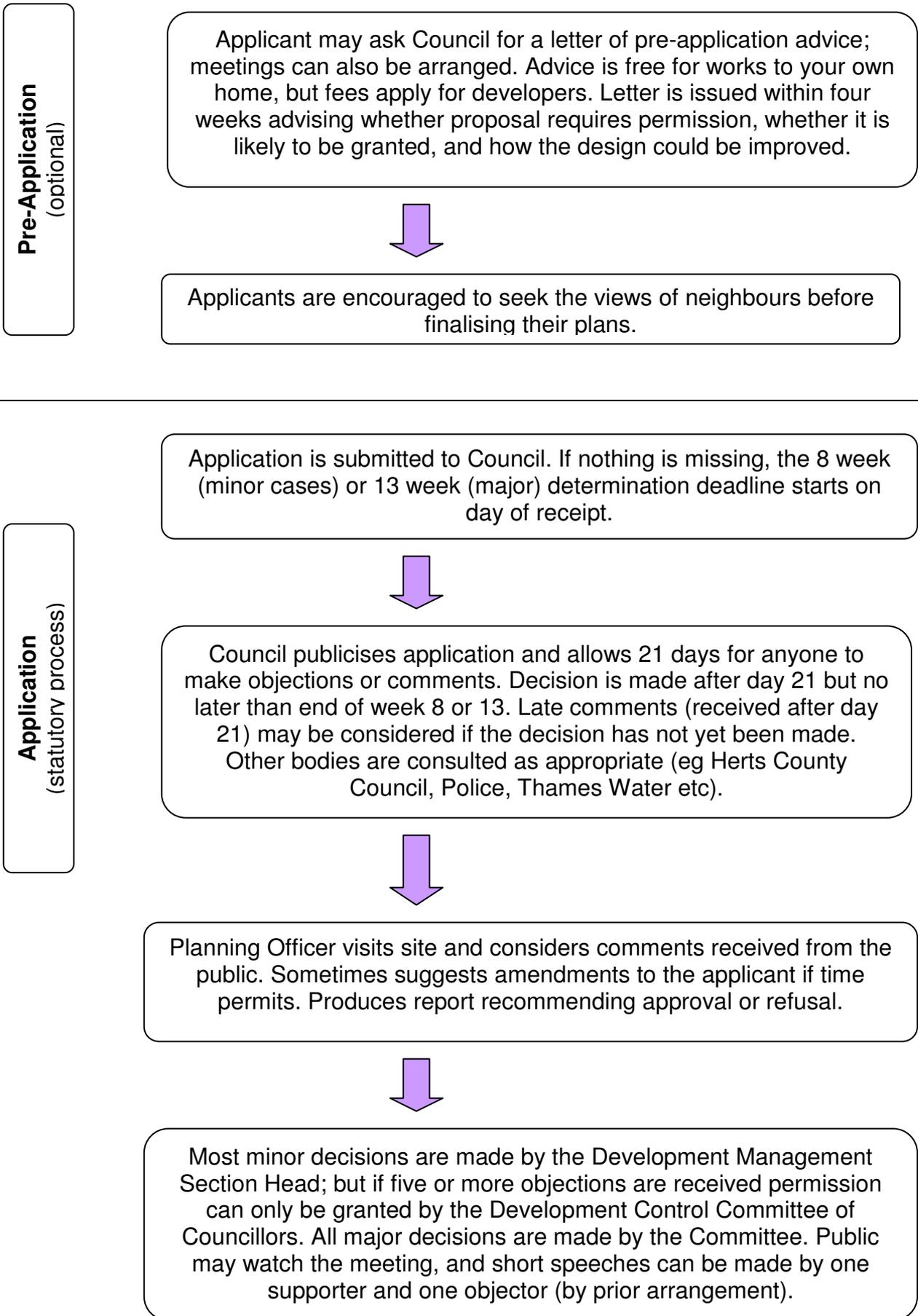
The following are considered to be major applications:

- residential development - where the number of dwellings exceeds 10 or the site area exceeds 0.5 hectares
- other uses (e.g., retail/employment)- where the floor space created exceeds 1,000 square metres
- development on a site with an area that exceeds 1 hectare.

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<sup>3</sup> Certain forms of minor development do not require planning permission. These are known as Permitted Development. The definition of Permitted Development is set out as national regulations in the General Permitted Development Order. Anybody wanting confirmation that their works would be Permitted Development can apply to the Council for a Certificate of Lawful Development, although this is optional.

## (5.2) The planning application process



Decision notice is sent to applicant's agent, and letters are sent to applicant and any interested people (e.g. objectors) to inform of decision and any conditions or reasons for refusal. Decision notice and approved or refused plans appear on Council's website within a few days, along with the officer's report.

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**Appeal**  
(statutory process)

Applicant may appeal against a refusal or a condition within six months (12 weeks for household applications). Appeals are considered by an independent Planning Inspector (not by the Council). Objectors cannot appeal against an approval; but can apply to High Court if they feel the Council have not handled the case correctly in law.

### **(5.3) Pre-application enquiries**

The Council encourage prospective applicants to seek our advice before formally submitting a scheme for planning permission. This can improve the quality of submitted applications and helps to avoid the wasted time and effort associated with submitting an application that is likely to be refused.

A pre-application enquiry is private correspondence, rather than being a formal application, so we do not usually publicise it, nor consult the public about it. We understand that someone who might for instance be wondering whether to buy a particular site would like to receive advice in confidence about whether they would be allowed to use that land in the way that they have in mind. Equally someone thinking of extending their home might want to discuss their options privately with the Council before they finalise their plans and show them to their neighbours.

However, we cannot promise 'secrecy'. As a public organisation we must provide copies of most types of document to anyone who asks to see them under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. Once a formal application has been made, the fact that there have been pre-application discussions becomes a matter of public record. The Planning Officer's report may refer to the advice that was given.

Pre-application advice can be sought by completing an application form (downloadable from our website at [www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-advice-and-guidance/](http://www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-advice-and-guidance/)) and sending it to the Council, supported by sketches, photographs, and as much information as possible about the current site and the proposal that is being one considered. A planning officer will reply within four weeks, offering comments on whether the scheme requires permission, how likely it is to be approved, and whether the design could be improved. This service is free to anyone considering works to their own home, such as an extension. Fees apply in the case of developers.

Major schemes are usually discussed internally at a meeting of the Major Cases Forum (which includes planning officers with a range of areas of expertise, with representatives from Herts Highways and the Police Architectural Liaison Officer) before comments are made.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals with their neighbours before submitting their application. In the case of a large scheme this might involve a public consultation exercise by the developer. It is good practice to include with the application a summary of what consultation has been done, and what feedback was received.

#### **(5.4) Types of application that are subject to public consultation**

The planning department consider various types of application, most of which are subject to public consultation - usually for a period of 21 days. The regulations governing this are set down nationally.

##### **Applications subject to public consultation:**

- Planning permission (both minor and major cases).
- Advertisement consent.
- Listed building consent.
- Conservation area consent (to demolish certain structures in a conservation area).

##### **Applications not subject to public consultation:**

- Non-material amendments (previously called “minor amendments”) to a planning permission. Only works that would have no impact on any neighbours are considered “non-material”; any other type of change requires a new application for planning permission.
- Discharging conditions attached to planning permissions (e.g. where further details were required).

##### **Applications for which consultation is not required by law, but where the council choose to notify neighbours:**

- Certificates of lawful development for proposed use.
- Certificates of lawful development for established use.

##### **Applications for which consultation is not required by law, but where the council choose to consult neighbours:**

- Works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- Works to trees in a Conservation Area.

**Consultation** means that we invite the public to write to us with their comments.

**Notification** means that we inform the public that an application has been made, but we do not invite comments. This is because in law the council must issue a Certificate of Lawful Development, regardless of what we or the neighbours might think of the scheme, if it complies with the legal definition of “permitted development” (i.e. types of development that do not require planning permission), or if the use has been proved to have been established over a period of several years.

## **(5.5) Methods of public consultation**

- Letters are usually sent to adjoining neighbours (i.e. where the boundaries touch). Sometimes we also write to other neighbours if we consider that they might be affected, although this is not required by law. The deadline for comments will be 21 days from the date on which the letters were sent.
- Sometimes site notices are put up instead (e.g. where there are many neighbours, or where it is not clear who the neighbours are, or where people living further away might also be interested). The 21 day deadline for comments is printed on the notice.
- Although the law requires us to either send letters to neighbours, or else put up a site notice, we sometimes do both: e.g. in cases that are considered likely to attract more general interest.
- Some types of application always require a site notice, such as works in a conservation area or affecting a listed building.
- Applications (but not pre-application enquiries) are featured on the council's website: [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk) and also on a national website [www.ukplanning.com](http://www.ukplanning.com). We publish a weekly list of new applications received on our website. The plans and the application form can be viewed online.
- Notices are placed in the Watford Observer local newspaper announcing major applications and works in conservation areas or to listed buildings.
- Plans for current applications can be viewed in the Customer Service Centre of the Town Hall. These are available to view whenever the Town Hall is open. On weekday mornings (9am to 1pm) there is also a Duty Planning Officer available to explain any aspect of the plans to anyone who is interested in them; no appointment is needed.
- Alternatively an appointment can be made to meet the Case Officer (the planning officer who is dealing with that particular application) for more detailed discussions.

## **(5.6) Commenting on an application**

- Any member of the public (not only neighbours) may make a representation on an application by writing a letter, an email, or by commenting on-line via the national Planning Portal website (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/public/planning/haveyoursay/>). A representation can be objecting to an application, or supporting it, or offering comments on it.
- Representations should normally be in writing, unless a disability makes this difficult, in which case alternative arrangements may be made, such as by taking dictations.
- Anonymous representations cannot be accepted. Any comments received are part of a public file, and will be available to anyone who wants to read them. The planning officer's report will contain a summary of the objections or other comments that were received.
- If a case is to be considered by the Development Control Committee, the meeting will be held in the evening and the public may watch. The applicant or his agent may address the Councillors in support of the application, and one representative of the objectors may also address them. This must be arranged in advance.
- If an application is refused, and an appeal is lodged with the Planning Inspectorate, the council will send copies of all the representations that were received to the Inspectorate. We will also inform those people that the appeal has been lodged, and that they can make further representations directly to the Inspectorate if they so wish.

## **(6) Monitoring and review of this statement**

The council reports annually on its progress in the Annual Monitoring Report, published on the council's website. At this stage we will also consider the effectiveness of consultation and whether the SCI needs to be reviewed as a result. However, the use of new ways of involving people need not wait for a formal revision of the SCI and we will continually seek to use the most effective methods we can within the limited resources available.

## **(7) Glossary**

### **AMR – Annual Monitoring Report**

A report submitted to Government by local planning authorities assessing Local Development Framework production progress and policy effectiveness.

### **Area Action Plans**

A Development Plan Document for areas of change or conservation. Their purpose is to deliver planned growth, stimulate regeneration and protect areas sensitive to change.

### **Development Management**

Development management is a positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals. It is led by the council as the local planning authority, working closely with those proposing developments and other stakeholders, as it receives and considers the merits of planning applications and whether the developments proposed should be given permission.

### **DPD - Development Plan Document**

Any Local Development Document that is part of the Development plan. A development plan document has to be independently tested by a Government inspector and carries full weight in relation to planning applications. Development plan documents include the local planning authority's core strategy, area action plans and proposals map.

### **Neighbourhood Forums**

Each ward has a Neighbourhood Forum at which the three elected councillors for the ward can engage with local residents, businesses and community groups. Information about meetings can be found on the council's website, under council meetings, agendas and reports.

### **LSP - Local Strategic Partnership**

An partnership that brings together organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sector within a local authority area, with the objective of improving people's quality of life. Watford's LSP is called One Watford and is responsible for producing the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Sustainable Community Strategy**

A strategy prepared by the local strategic partnership to help deliver community aspirations. Local development frameworks must have regard to, and should be the spatial expression of, the sustainable community strategy.

## **Appendix A – Specific and general consultation bodies**

**Specific consultation bodies** are listed in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended in 2008 and 2009) and relate to organisations responsible for services and utilities and infrastructure provision. The specific bodies must be consulted when the council is preparing development plan documents in which they may have an interest. The specific consultation bodies are currently as listed below but given the Government's stated intention to abolish regional planning it is likely that amended regulations will be issued:

- the regional planning body (due to be abolished)
- a relevant authority, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local council, such as:
  - a local planning authority
  - a county council
  - a parish council
  - a police authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- Homes and Communities Agency
- The Secretary of State for Transport in relation to the Secretary of State's functions concerning railways and as highway authority
- a Regional Development Agency whose area is in, or adjoins, the area of the council (currently EEDA, but likely to be abolished and replaced by Local Enterprise Partnerships)
- any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003
- any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the council
- if it exercises functions in any part of the area of the local planning authority:
  - primary care trust
  - a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1) (b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989
  - a person to whom a licence has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986
  - sewerage undertaker
  - water undertaker.

Where bodies listed cease to exist, successor bodies will be consulted where applicable.

**General Consultation Bodies** are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as:

- a) voluntary bodies some all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area,
- b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area,
- c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area,
- d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area,
- e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area.

## **Appendix B – Further information**

The following organisations and websites offer additional information on the planning process:

### **Department for Communities and Local Government**

This is the government department responsible for planning. A range of information on planning can be found on their website [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### **Planning Aid**

Planning Aid offers free, independent and professional advice on planning matters, although for detailed assistance you may need to meet certain eligibility criteria. East of England Planning Aid can be contacted on 0870 850 9801. See their website at [www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid/planning\\_aid\\_in\\_your\\_area/east\\_of\\_england/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid/planning_aid_in_your_area/east_of_england/)

### **Planning Inspectorate**

The government agency dealing with examinations into Development Plan Documents, and dealing with appeals and particular types of application. [www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk)

### **Planning Portal**

The UK Government's online resource for planning and building regulations in England and Wales. You can make, view and comment on planning applications and appeals as well as finding out information about the process. [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)