

Statement of Community Involvement

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Development Framework



SUBMISSION DRAFT

MARCH 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Foreword

This document provides a summary of the Draft Submission Statement of Community Involvement, which is produced by Copeland Borough Council as part of the Local Development Framework. The document covers the Borough of Copeland outside of the National Park.

The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement as part of the new Planning system. The Statement of Community Involvement aims to set down how and when the Council will involve the local community in the planning process.

The planning system affects everyone; policies and plans help the Council to determine which planning applications to approve or refuse. Therefore it is important that all sectors of the community are involved in the process.

[illegible]

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All comments must be received by 4pm on xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
2007.

All comments received will be made available for public viewing.

This document is also available to download from the Council's website
www.copeland.gov.uk



Glossary

A glossary can be found in Appendix G of the Statement of Community Involvement explaining further terms used in the planning system.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced many changes to the planning regime operating in England and Wales – the work which in Copeland has previously been delivered under the “Local Plans” banner, will be replaced by the “Local Development Framework” (LDF). The Act’s reforms are intended to make the preparation of development plans and other non-statutory documents quicker and more flexible, with increased community involvement. Each local planning authority is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how and when the local community and stakeholders will be involved in the planning process.

The Local Development Framework consists of a number of development plan documents; at the local level the Council is responsible for the production of Local Development Documents. This document aims to set down how and when the Council will involve the local community and stakeholders in the production of Local Development Documents and also in the consideration of planning applications.

Planning Policy

Who will we consult?

The Regulations for the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 set down specific consultation bodies that must be consulted; these are listed in Section 8 of the SCI. The Council is committed to involving as many organisations, groups and individuals as possible in the planning process.

A database of Local Development Framework contacts has been created; this will be used to consult on the preparation of Local Development Documents where appropriate. The database will be maintained to ensure it is up to date. Anyone can request their details be added to/deleted from the LDF database at any time to receive consultation documents.

The Council is keen to engage those people who belong to traditionally under-represented groups, i.e. single parent families, young people, people from ethnic minority groups, homeless people, people with disabilities, people living in areas of deprivation or low income and people living in remote areas.

The Council will work with the West Cumbria Local Strategic Partnership to ensure close co-ordination of consultation between planning and the West Cumbria Community Strategy. We will endeavour to utilise to maximum effect the *Community Gateway* consultation network which is currently being developed, in particular an older person's forum, disability forum and a young person's network.

How will we consult you?

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Regulations set down minimum public participation requirements which each local planning authority must comply with in the production of Local Development Documents which make up the Local Development Framework. The Council intends to meet the requirements in the regulations and, where possible, exceed these when both staff time and financial resources allow. The Council as a minimum will meet the following minimum requirements as set out in the regulations:

- Make copies of all documentation available for inspection during normal office hours at the council's principal office and other suitable locations for the duration of the six week consultation period;

- Place all documentation and supporting information on the council's website (www.copeland.gov.uk) with details of where and when the documents are available to be inspected;
- Send copies of relevant material to the Government Office and to each statutory consultee in accordance with the guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12);
- Give notice by advertisement in local newspapers stating where and when documents can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, where to send representations and the closing date for representations.

The Council recognise that consultation methods may need to be tailored, we will identify the most appropriate methods of consultation for the specific Local Development Document by considering the characteristics of each sector of the community that will be involved. The following table identifies consultation techniques to be used for each type of Local Development Document:

	Statement of Community Involvement	Core Strategy	General Development Control Policies and Site Specific Allocations	Area Action Plans	Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
Consultation Drafts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Council Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Neighbourhood Forums	x	? (selected)	? (selected)	? (selected)	? (selected)

Presentations to Meetings	x	?	?	?	?
Topic-based Focus Groups	x	?	✓	✓	?
Exhibitions	x	?	✓	✓	?
Leaflets, Posters & Letters	?	?	?	?	?
Questionnaire	✓	?	?	?	?
Media	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning for Real	x	?	?	?	?

✓ - Yes x - No ? – Possible, where relevant, and resources allow

How will we report back to you?

In addition to the formal consideration of Local Development Documents by the Executive, meetings of the Local Development Framework Working Party will be held where necessary to examine issues involved in the preparation of Local Development Documents and advise the Executive accordingly. We will publish on our website and make available copies of all representations received at our main offices and the Council's response and justification.

Representations received will be acknowledged. Consultees who have submitted comments will be informed of the Council's intended response. This information will be made available to view on the Council's website, the Council's offices at Whitehaven and Millom and at libraries in the Copeland Borough.

The Council will notify those who submit representations and those who request to be notified of the submission of a Local Development Document to the Secretary of State and then of its adoption.

Development Control

Development Control is a statutory function of a local planning authority. At District level the Council is responsible for dealing with planning applications for all developments in the Borough of Copeland outside of the National Park, except minerals and waste disposal matters which are handled by Cumbria County Council. The County Council also deals with planning applications for development that it will carry out itself or jointly.

The Council's Development Control Section deals with the processing of Planning Applications, taking account of the Council's development plan policies; Supplementary Planning Guidance/Supplementary Planning Documents; development briefs; government guidance and the individual merits of each scheme, in order to manage development in Copeland in the public interest and to help safeguard the environment.

The procedures for consulting on planning applications are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

Planning Applications

Pre-application Advice

We encourage applicants to contact the Development Control Section at an early stage to find out what permission is required and, if necessary, to obtain pre-application advice.

The general public can enquire as to whether their proposal requires planning permission and/or building regulations by completing and returning a “Householder Development Enquiry Form”, which is available from the Council Offices or on the Copeland website. When completed and returned a written response will normally be sent to the enquirer within five working days.

Appointments can also be made with a Development Control Officer to discuss proposals by contacting the Development Services Section 01946 598418 / 598421.

Consultation on Planning Applications

Copeland Borough Council deals with a wide variety of applications for planning permission. The Council currently uses a combination of methods to consult on planning applications, these are listed below:

- Press Notices;
- Site Notices;
- Individual letters to neighbouring property owners;
- Notification letters to Parish/Town Councils and other statutory bodies such as Cumbria Highways; the Environment Agency; United Utilities; English Heritage;
- Liaison with representative groups such as Copeland Disability Forum and Whitehaven Heritage Action Group;
- A Weekly List of planning applications is available for inspection on-line at www.copeland.gov.uk and is also sent to the local newspaper.

The Council sends individual letters to properties immediately adjacent to the application site to consult with neighbouring residents and businesses. For larger scale proposals this would be extended to a wider area depending principally on the nature and scale of the proposal. Consultation letters invite comments within 21 days of the date of the letter. Site notices are posted as required by the Regulations and are used to advertise proposals which are

deemed to have a wider impact on the community. Site notices may also be used in certain cases, for example, where ownership of neighbouring land may be unknown.

Where a press notice is required or thought to be necessary, the Council will place this in one of two of the local newspapers depending on the location on the application site.

If an application is significantly amended during its consideration, the Council will send a further round of consultation letters to those previously consulted and to people who have also commented on the proposal. A copy of the revised plans will also be sent to the Parish/Town Councils. However, if the Council considers that the proposed amendments alter the original application radically then a new application maybe required to enable proper consideration of the revised scheme and to allow full consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies.

The Council will place copies of applications and accompanying plans, on deposit at The Copeland Centre in Whitehaven. Copies of applications relating to the South Copeland area will also be available for inspection at the Council Centre in Millom.

The Council will accept comments by post, fax and e-mail.

Some 80% of the applications received by the Council are dealt with through delegated powers to officers and do not go to the Planning Panel for decision making. The Planning Panel is made up of Council Members providing representation from across the Borough. The Council allows the public to speak at the Planning Panel meetings, by prior arrangement. Anyone who has submitted written comments on an application may address the Panel for five minutes. The applicant has the same period of time to respond to the issues raised by an objector.

The Council posts decisions on planning applications on the Council's website. Parish and Town Councils receive a copy of the decision notice. A list of all decisions issued during the previous month is attached to the Planning Panel agenda.

At present a weekly list of applications received, reports to the Planning Panel and decisions on all the applications are available on the Council website.

Planning Portal

The Planning Portal is the UK government's online planning and building regulations resource. There is a link from the homepage of the Copeland Borough Council website to this site which can be accessed to learn about planning and building regulations, apply for planning permission and building regulations consent, find out about development in the vicinity and appeal against a decision and research government policy.

Resources

The Council has limited resources and has therefore identified methods, which aim to use existing consultation networks, for example those developed by the Local Strategic Partnership and the Neighbourhood Forums. The area-based regeneration initiatives operating in parts of the Borough are also a vital link to the community and collaborative working will be pursued where appropriate. In addition the Council will consider the use of outside facilitators particularly in relation to Planning for Real exercises. We will also, where appropriate, work with other Local Planning Authorities in Cumbria to identify possible joint consultation exercises. Financial resources have been allocated for the process of consultation.

The consultation techniques which have been included in this Statement of Community Involvement have been selected with the aim of engaging as wide a coverage of the community as possible, whilst using resources efficiently. Where possible dedicated officers will lead on the production of Local

Development Documents and where consultants are commissioned for all or any part of the work Council Officers will lead on arrangements for consultation in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach. Any change to the Planning Policy Team will have implications for the effective delivery of the Statement of Community Involvement.

How will we monitor and review the Statement of Community Involvement?

It is intended that the Statement of Community Involvement will be a flexible document. The consultation methods used will be continually monitored to evaluate their effectiveness. This may result in techniques being removed and new ideas and opportunities being tried.