

**Forest Heath District Council  
&  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council**

**Shared**

**Statement of Community  
Involvement (SCI)**

**Consultation Draft**

**2013**

Forest Heath • St Edmundsbury

**West Suffolk**  
working together

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## Introduction

Local Planning Authorities, (LPAs), are required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement, (SCI). The SCI is intended to set out a vision and strategy for involving the community in the preparation of the documents that make up their Development Plan, in addition to identifying how the community can become more involved in the planning application process. The SCI, therefore, sets out how and when a LPA will seek to engage with their local communities with regard to most of their planning functions.

In preparing their SCI, LPAs are recommended to consult on a draft version and take into account any recommendations made on it when finalising the document and prior to seeking formal adoption by their respective Council.

In the case of Forest Heath, a 'Preferred Option' version of the SCI was prepared and consulted upon in June 2005. A final version of the document was not produced and as a consequence, the Council does not currently have a formally adopted SCI. This draft document has taken into consideration responses to the 2005 consultation and seeks your views on it prior to finalising the SCI in readiness for adoption by Council.

In the case of St Edmundsbury, a SCI was prepared, consulted upon and finally adopted and published in February 2008.

This draft consultation document proposes putting in place one SCI that will apply to both local planning authority areas. It reflects the newly aligned processes and procedures in place for Plan making and planning application assessment that are being put into place as the planning functions of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury become 'shared'. Central Government are currently encouraging such closer working arrangements between authorities wherever practicable.

In reading this document it is important to understand that, although the Council's are sharing the Planning service, each district is a separate legal entity in so far as the designated 'Local Planning Authority', (LPA), is concerned. This draft SCI has been written within this context.

## **PART 1 – PLAN MAKING**

### 1.1 Local Plan documents

Government guidance states that a Local Planning Authority, (LPA), should produce a Local Plan for its area. These Local Plans can be reviewed in whole or in part and should respond flexibly to changing circumstances.

Local Plans are seen as the key to delivering development that reflects the vision and aspirations of their local communities. For this reason, a wide section of the community needs to be engaged in their preparation. The development of Local Plans must also involve co-operation and consultation with neighbouring Local Authority areas and the County Council to ensure that strategic and cross-boundary issues have been identified and the unmet needs of other neighbouring authorities and their residents have been considered wherever practicable. Utility and service providers also play a key role and early engagement with these organisations in the preparation of plans is important.

As at March 2013, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury currently have their own Local Plans comprising a number of inter-related documents that include the Core Strategy, (adopted May 2010 in the case of FHDC and December 2010 in the case of SEBC), which forms the cornerstone of the development planning framework within each area. Subsequent to this a Development Management Policies Local Plan document has been prepared 'jointly' comprising policies for application across both Authority areas. St Edmundsbury are currently progressing their 'Vision 2031' Local Plan documents whilst Forest Heath are progressing their Site Allocations document. Going forward, there will continue to be new local plan documents prepared across both districts and their preparation will need to conform to the requirements of the SCI. Each district will continue to publish separate and up-to-date Local Development Schemes that will set out which local plan documents are to be produced and when.

All documents that are prepared must accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF), and current 'plan making' legislation as is appears within the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

#### 1.1.1 The Procedure for producing our Local Plan documents

The procedure for bringing through to adoption a Local Plan document, jointly or otherwise, is as follows:

- Consultation will take place and comment will be sought on the 'Issues and Options' in the early stages of the document's preparation. The relevant Council will advise all of the specific consultation bodies that they consider may have an interest in the subject of the particular Local Plan document and all others that are deemed appropriate, (including all of those appearing on the Development Plan mailing list), of the key principles and the evidence required. This will be done in a simple manner in order to build understanding and encourage wide-ranging debate on its

content. In preparing the Local Plan documents the Council must take into account any representations made to them at this 'Issues and Options Stage'<sup>1</sup>.

- Following consideration of all comments made on the 'Issues and Options', a complete draft Local Plan document will be published for a statutory and formal consultation period of at least 6 weeks. The draft document and a statement of representations procedure will be made available for inspection within the relevant principal offices, (appendix A), and on the Council's website. A statement of the representations procedure will also be sent to each of the statutory consultation bodies and other 'general' consultees that were consulted at the 'Issues and Options' stage.
- Following consideration of all representations made, the relevant Council will submit the Local Plan document, including requisite Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment, (SA/SEA), to the Secretary of State for independent inspection/examination, together with a consultation statement, (summarising the representations made to the previous rounds of consultation). As soon as is reasonably practicable following submission the Council will make the submission version of the Local Plan document and associated documents available for inspection within their principal offices and on their website and they will notify their statutory and 'general' consultation bodies of this fact. They will also give notice to those persons who specifically requested to be notified of the submission of the Local Plan document to the Secretary of State.
- The Independent Inspector will decide on the arrangements for examining the Local Plan document. At least 6 weeks before the opening of the independent examination the LPA will make available for inspection within their principal offices and on their website, details of the date, time and place of the examination and the name of the person appointed to carry out the examination.
- Following the examination and receipt of the Inspectors report the relevant LPA will make the Inspector's recommendations and their reasons for making those recommendations available for inspection with their principal offices and on their website. They will also notify those who specifically asked to be notified that the report is available for inspection.
- As soon as is reasonable practicable after the Council adopts the Local Plan document, (should they choose to do so), they will make available for inspection within their principal offices and on their website the Local Plan document itself, an adoption statement, the SA/SEA and a statement detailing where the Local Plan document is available for inspection and the places and times at which the Local Plan document can be inspected. The Council will also send the adoption statement to any persons who specifically asked to be notified of the adoption of the Local Plan document in addition to sending the adoption statement to the Secretary of State.

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<sup>1</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 are not prescriptive with regard to the number of 'Issues and Options' consultations (Regulation 18) that a LPA employs.

Consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment, (SEA), and Sustainability Appraisal, (SA)

The draft local plan documents will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, (SA), carried out jointly with a Strategic Environmental Assessment, (SEA). These processes will assess the environmental, social and economic implications of the document so that policies will reflect the objectives of sustainable development.

Sustainability Appraisal is a continuous process and a Sustainability Appraisal Report will be published with each of our published consultation documents. This will allow any interested party to comment on the assessments made of the potential environmental, social and economic effects of particular proposals.

Due to their technical nature, these documents will be shared with specific social, economic and environmental consultees for their input. However, these documents will also be made available to all with an interest in or likely to be affected by the proposals being assessed. Copies will be available either on request or will be accessible on the relevant Council's website

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## 1.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents or SPDs add further detail to the policies contained within a Local Plan and again they can be developed jointly where practicable. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the formal 'Development Plan'.

In accordance with the 2012 regulations, before the adoption of an SPD, a draft document, (and associated SA/SEA where required), will be subject to a minimum four week public consultation period. The Council will make copies of the draft SPD documents and details of when and how representations can be made, available for inspection within their principal offices and on their website.

Once they have considered the representations made on the draft SPD, and made any consequential amendments, the relevant Council will seek to formally adopt the document. A statement will be prepared setting out who was consulted when preparing the SPD, a summary of the main issues raised by those persons and an explanation how these issues have been addressed in the final version of the SPD. As soon as reasonably practicable following adoption by Council the LPA will:

- Make available for inspection within their principal offices and on their website the adopted SPD and adoption statement.
- Send a copy of the adoption statement to any person who has been asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD.

## Concept Statements, Masterplans and Development Briefs

From time to time in both districts there will be a need to prepare site specific planning guidance that will provide a detailed framework for the development of sites. These will commonly take the form of a concept statement, masterplan or development brief and will be prepared either by the respective council, landowner or developer. In preparing such frameworks there will be a need for consultation and engagement which should involve the principles set out in the pre-application section below. These documents will normally be considered for adoption by the Council and at that time a report of consultation and the changes to the draft document made as a result of the consultation should also be published.

## Other Policy Documents

Other policy documents will be prepared from time to time, such as conservation area appraisals and non-statutory land use strategies. Consultation on draft documents will take place in accordance with the framework in this SCI and will only be considered for adoption by the relevant council if a report of consultation and report of any changes resulting from the consultation are published with the final draft.

### 1.3 Planning Strategically across Local Boundaries

Under the provisions of the Localism Act, local authorities have a duty to co-operate on issues that cross administrative boundaries. The government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities.

There is also a requirement to consult and work collaboratively with all partners, including private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers, across all administrative boundaries, to ensure sustainable development objectives are met in the preparation of Local Plan documents. Indeed, the LPA will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary implications when their Local Plan documents are submitted for examination. We will also consult with neighbouring parish councils, where appropriate, in the preparation of our planning documents.

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## 1.4 Methods of Community Engagement

Some of the ways in which Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury intend to engage with various people, groups and organisations are identified in table 1 below. These methods of community engagement are considered to be the most appropriate given their shared resource and the requirement that the Local Plans produced reflect the priorities and aspirations of their respective communities.

Specifically, the Councils will engage with:

- a) all statutory consultees – those bodies which the government specifically asks them to keep informed with progress that they make with their Local Plan documents and SPDs, such as various Government departments and statutory undertakers,
- b) their Parish Councils and neighbouring Parish Councils where appropriate,
- c) Suffolk County Council and neighbouring District/County Councils where appropriate,
- d) local bodies and organisations, e.g. business forums,
- e) individuals and organisations who have expressed an interest in or a willingness to be involved in the plan making process, such as interested members of the public, landowners and developers.

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury hold a shared 'Development Plan mailing list' with contact details for all of these individuals and organisations. This mailing list also contains the details of organisations that act in the interests of a number of harder to reach groups including:

- Age UK Suffolk,
- UK Youth Parliament,
- Forest Heath Disability Forum,
- Racing Welfare,
- Disability Access Group,
- Equal Opportunities Commission,
- Commission for Racial Equality,
- East Anglian Gypsy Council,
- West Suffolk Borders Primary Care Group,
- West Suffolk Disability Resource Centre,
- NHS Suffolk, (via Suffolk County Council),
- West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group,
- Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations.

Community engagement work for the Development Plans will be carried out primarily by the existing members of staff within the shared planning service that specialise in policy work. The Development Plan budget takes account of the need to fund the community and stakeholder involvement as set out within this SCI and across both Local Authority areas.

Evolution of the SCI and the Development Plan is being co-ordinated by the joint Head of Planning and Regulatory Services who is also the relevant budget holder and can therefore ensure that the SCI and the Development Plan processes are resourced and managed effectively. The Planning Team has and will continue to make use of their shared

Communications Team in order to publicise consultation periods and keep residents and stakeholders engaged in the progress of the Development Plans on an ongoing basis.

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Table 1: Community engagement in the production of Development Plans

At various stages in the production of their various Local Plan documents the LPAs may utilise some or all of the following methods of community engagement. An attempt will be made to tailor the method(s) of communication to the requirements of specific groups or communities if it is considered that this will aid their understanding of issues pertinent to them.

| <b>Method</b>                                | <b>Comments</b>   |
|--|---|
| Newspaper articles and press releases        | Articles written for newspapers and press releases at key stages are a good method of summarising topics and issues in a user friendly manner, with the added benefit of reaching a potentially large audience. Articles will also be placed in relevant newspapers circulating in the local area should their publication be timely. Press Releases will also be available on the Council's website.   |
| Exhibitions                                  | Exhibitions can provide a visual rather than a written means of putting across ideas and concepts.  |
| Drop-in information sessions                 | Drop-in sessions in community halls and Council offices provide opportunities for people to have a one-to-one discussion with Council officers on the content of a draft local plan document.   |
| Website/Social Media                         | The Council website is a useful virtual notice board for the community to engage in their own time and at their own pace. The website also has advantages of online interaction, (including an online representation facility for the statutory consultation stages). The LPA is obliged to make use of the website under the current Planning Regulations. The Councils will make use of other forms of Social media, where appropriate, to encourage interactions/debate among groups of people and share/exchange information and ideas within virtual communities and networks. |
| Leaflets and Newsletters                     | Leaflets and newsletters are a good means of distilling information to a large number of people. Distribution may be targeted at particular groups.   |
| Dissemination of information via Councillors | The role of councillors is important as a means of cascading information to both the community at large and to groups on which they sit.  |
| Parish/Town Council Workshops and Briefings  | Workshops and Briefings are a useful means of engaging with Parish/Town   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | councils in the development of Local Plan documents and in establishing local opinion on various issues and options. Parish Councils can also undertake local surveys and may produce Parish/Neighbourhood Plans.   |
| Consultation with specific groups and stakeholders | Sharing information through stakeholder groups can be an effective way of disseminating information to a wide range of people.  |
| Focus Groups                                       | The Councils will facilitate 'focus groups' to discover perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards development proposals and other planning matters. Such group settings can enable participants to talk freely with other group members/residents and share concerns. |

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## 1.5 Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders

Under the provisions of the Localism Act, communities have new powers to produce Neighbourhood Plans and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders that can become part of the statutory development plan for an area, (should they be successful in passing the examination and referendum stages). The Council's have a 'duty to support' communities in the delivery of these 'Plans' and 'Orders' but the Government has not prescribed how local planning authorities should meet this requirement. The relevant Councils will therefore tailor their support to take account of local circumstances, such as the complexity of the Neighbourhood Plan being prepared, the skills and resources of the local authority and the local groups and being mindful to the most efficient use of available resources.

However, the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders will need to have regard to the principles of consultation and engagement contained within this SCI.

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## PART 2 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

This part of the document sets out Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury's shared service standards and their statutory requirements as they relate to the administering and assessment of planning applications.

### 2.1 The Pre-application stage

Applicants proposing major development or involving a degree of sensitivity are encouraged to engage in pre-application discussions with planning officers. The object of pre-application discussions is to discuss whether the principle of development is acceptable and to clarify the format, type and level of information required for submission with the planning application itself.

Applicants are also encouraged to carry out pre-application consultations with other interested/relevant bodies such as the highways authority, Natural England and/or the Environment Agency. It is intended that this process will result in the receipt of better applications where all appropriate information is readily available for assessment by the relevant planning authority and for those commenting on the application prior to it being determined. The obvious benefit for the applicant is that their application can be processed more effectively and efficiently in the time allowed.

Developers are also encouraged to engage with the community, parish or town councils and other interested groups, for major or particularly sensitive proposals prior to the application being submitted. The form and extent of such engagement will vary depending on the particular proposal but may include one or more of the following;

- Public exhibitions,
- workshops,
- drop-in sessions,
- websites,
- provision of a scale model or computer generated image of the proposal showing how it impacts on the surrounding area,
- Public Meetings,
- presentations to Town/Parish Councils,
- surveys of local residents/businesses,
- use of local media,
- use of Planning Aid.

Whilst encouraging this approach, it must be recognised that there is a need for the LPA to maintain probity, transparency and impartiality. Should any Planning Officer be invited to attend any of the above meetings, exhibitions or workshops, it must only be on the basis of a detached observer. For smaller proposals, the applicant will be encouraged to engage with neighbours so that any concerns can be addressed prior to the planning application being submitted.

Under the provision of the Localism Act there is a new power to require pre-application consultation on certain larger developments. In other words, the pre-application consultation duty in the Planning Act is being extended to some types of 'ordinary' planning applications. This change requires the applicant to bring their planning application

to the attention of a 'majority' of those living in the vicinity and give them an opportunity to comment on it. The applicant will then have the opportunity to resolve any issues, or provide mitigation if necessary, to make the scheme more acceptable to local people.

## 2.2 Publicising Planning Applications

Article 13 of the Town & Country Planning, (Development Management Procedure), (England), Order 2010 lays down the statutory requirements for publicising applications for planning permission. These are as follows:

In the case of an application for planning permission for a development which:

- a) is the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment, (EIA), accompanied by an Environmental Statement,
- b) does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the applicant relates or is situated, or,
- c) would affect a right of way to which Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, (public rights of way), applies,

the LPA will publicise the application:

- by giving requisite notification by a site notice in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days and,
- by publication of the notice in a newspaper circulating in the locality in which the land to which the application relates is situated,
- by publication of the application details on their website.

## Major Developments

Proposals for major development can potentially have an impact on a wider area than just the immediate locality of the site. Article 2 of the DMPO 2010 defines 'major development' as development involving one or more of the following:

- a) The winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits,
- b) Waste development,
- c) The provision of dwelling houses where:
  - (i) The number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more, or,
  - (ii) The development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectare or more and it is not known whether the development falls within (c) (i),
- (d) The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more, or,
- (e) Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

As well as encouraging developers to undertake appropriate levels of pre-application engagement, as outlined above, planning applications for 'major development', will be publicised by the relevant LPA as follows:

- By site display notice placed on or nearby the site for at least 21 days or by serving the notice on any adjoining owner or occupier,

- by publication of the notice in a newspaper circulating in the locality in which the land to which the application relates is situated,
- by publication of the application details on their web-pages.

### Other Cases

For cases falling outside of the above definitions, the LPA will publicise planning applications:

- By giving requisite notice by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days or by serving the notice on any adjoining owner or occupier,
- by publication of the application details on their website.

### Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

With respect of applications for Listed Building or Conservation Area Consent, the LPA are obliged by the regulations to:

(a) Publish details in local newspaper(s), a notice indicating the nature of the works which are the subject of the application and naming the places where a copy of the application, and of all plans and other documents submitted with it, will be open to inspection by the public during a period of 21 days beginning with the date of publication of the notice, and,

(b) For not less than 21 days display on or near the building a notice containing the same particulars as are required to be contained in the notice to be published in accordance with (a) above,

(c) For not less than 21 days, publish on their website the following information:

- The address or location of the proposed works,
- the nature of the proposed works,
- the date by which any representations about the application must be made, (which must not be before the last day of the period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the information is published),
- where and when the application may be inspected, and,
- how representations may be made about the application.

### Tree Preservation Order Applications

A Tree Preservation Order, (TPO), is an Order made by a Council in respect of a tree(s) because the tree is considered to bring amenity value to the surrounding area. The order makes it an offence to cut down, uproot, prune, lop or damage the tree in question without first obtaining the Council's consent. A TPO can apply to a single tree, a group of trees or a woodland.

The Councils are required to keep a register of all applications for consent to works on trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order, (TPO), which must be made available to the public at all reasonable hours. The register includes details of every application under the TPO and the Council's decision on that application. The Council is not required to publicise



applications more widely, for example by sending letters to local residents, putting up site notices or placing advertisements in local newspapers. However, where local people might be affected by the application or where there is likely to be a good deal of public interest, the Councils may consider displaying a site notice or notifying the residents, authorities or groups affected. In addition, where an application is submitted by a neighbour, the Councils should make sure that the owner or occupier of the land on which the tree stands is informed and given the chance to comment. In the case of Forest Heath a site notice is always put up to publicise any TPO application. In the case of St Edmundsbury, neighbours are notified and where there is a particular public interest a site notice will be displayed.

### Trees in Conservation Areas

Trees in Conservation Areas which are already protected by a TPO are subject to the normal TPO controls. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 also makes special provision for trees in Conservation Areas which are not the subject of a TPO. Under section 211, anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a Conservation Area is required to give the Council six weeks prior notice, (a 'section 211 notice'). The purpose of this requirement is to give the Council an opportunity to consider whether a TPO should be made in respect of the tree.

Although the Council is not required to publicise a section 211 notice they are advised to consider seeking the views of local residents, authorities or groups, particularly in cases where there is likely to be a public interest. There will be cases where the Council consider no publicity is warranted. In cases where they believe some publicity is warranted the Council can decide what form it should take having regard to the particular circumstances of the case. They may decide to invite views on the proposal, for example, by writing to nearby residents and groups or by displaying a site notice or even by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper. In the case of Forest Heath a site notice is always put up to publicise a Section 211 notice. In the case of St Edmundsbury, neighbours are notified and where there is a particular public interest a site notice will be displayed.

## 2.3 How information is made available

### Site Notices

As mentioned above, the Councils use site notices to advertise all of its planning applications. The site notice includes the date on which the notice was displayed and gives interested parties 21 days from the date of the notice being displayed within which to submit their comments. The notice also specifies the application site address, a description of the proposal, the planning application number and details of where the application can be inspected. It also advises that any representations should be made in writing.

### Neighbour Notification

Upon receipt of a valid planning application all occupiers/owners of buildings opposite and adjacent to the application site will be sent a letter notifying them of the application. This is irrespective of the land-use and whether or not the owners/occupiers are separated by a road/track or an area of undeveloped land.

### Local Advertisement

As mentioned above, in order to fulfil their statutory requirements, the LPA will place an advert in one or more of the local newspapers which may include the Newmarket/Mildenhall Journal, the Bury Free Press and/or the Haverhill Echo. Members of the public are advised that they have 21 days from the date of the advert to submit their comments.

### Viewing of Planning Applications

For Forest Heath, all planning applications are available for public inspection at the Council Offices on College Heath Road in Mildenhall from Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 5pm, (4:30pm on Fridays). It is also possible to view planning applications submitted within Newmarket at the offices of Newmarket Town Council. Such viewings are by appointment only and you are therefore advised to call them on 01638 667227 beforehand. Newmarket Town Council is based at the King Edward VII Memorial Hall, High Street, Newmarket, CB8 8JP. All planning applications are also available to view on the Council's website by visiting [www.forest-heath.gov.uk](http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk) and following the links to the Planning Explorer pages.

For St Edmundsbury, planning applications are available for inspection at West Suffolk House on Western Way in Bury St Edmunds between 9.00 am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday and at Lower Downs Slade in Haverhill between 9.00 am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Again, all applications are made available for viewing on the Council's website at [www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk) and following the links to Planning.

### Access to Planning Officers

Members of the public, applicants, their representatives or other interested parties are able to seek advice from planning officers. A request for advice or information can take the form of letters, emails or through personal visits. Once an application has been submitted, planning officers are normally unable to express an opinion as to the likely outcome of an application until all interested parties have had an opportunity to submit their views and information.

## 2.4 How to give feedback / comment on a Planning Application

Comments are welcomed on any planning application that either support, object, or simply comment on particular proposals. Any comments received in writing will be used to help inform the decision making process and are a matter of public record. These can be made in writing to the planning officer or can be sent via email. It is also possible to make comments online. All comments received in this manner will be published on the respective Council's website.

It is particularly important that you send your written comments to the planning officer as the responses received through this process may well help decide how the application is ultimately determined, either by delegated powers or by the Planning Committee. However, for comments to be taken into account they must be a material planning consideration. If it is decided that a planning application will have to go to the Planning Committee for a decision to be made, there will be the opportunity for an objector and the applicant to present verbal comments to the Committee.

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### 3. Monitoring and Reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement

The LPA will review regularly whether or not the procedures for involving the community have achieved a representative level of public involvement across all sections of the community as part of our monitoring processes for both the Development Plan and planning application processes. For Forest Heath, It is intended that improved methods for engaging with the community in plan making and in the processing of planning applications will also be identified and developed via the existing Planning Service Users Group, (PLUG), meeting structure.

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#### 4. Obtaining Independent Planning Advice

Planning Aid is a voluntary service linked to the RTPI offering free, independent and professional advice on town planning matters to community groups. Planning Aid enables local communities, particularly those with limited resources, to participate effectively in planning matters. Among other activities, Planning Aid:

- Provide information and training on the planning system,
- advise and assist groups in playing a part in the development of plans and policies at the national and local level,
- help communities develop their own strategies for their own area, including advice on producing Neighbourhood Plans and Orders,
- organise educational projects for all age groups.

Contact details for Planning Aid are provided below:

##### East of England Planning Aid

38 Cambridge Place

Cambridge

CB2 1NS

Tel: (01223) 350 850

e-mail: [eeadmin@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:eeadmin@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

## 5. Acronyms

An explanation of the acronyms used in this SCI is provided below:

|      |  |
|------|--|
| AMR  | Authorities Monitoring Report          |
| CAT  | Conservation Area Tree                 |
| DM   | Development Management                 |
| DMPO | Development Management Procedure Order |
| DPD  | Development Plan Document              |
| EC   | European Commission                    |
| EIA  | Environmental Impact Assessment        |
| EiP  | Examination in Public                  |
| FHDC | Forest Heath District Council          |
| GDPO | General Development Procedure Order    |
| GPDO | General Permitted Development Order    |
| LPWG | Local Plan Working Group               |
| LGO  | Local Government Ombudsman             |
| LPA  | Local Planning Authority               |
| LDS  | Local Development Scheme               |
| NDO  | Neighbourhood Development Order        |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework     |
| PLUG | Planning Service User Group            |
| RTPI | Royal Town Planning Institute          |
| SA   | Sustainability Appraisal               |
| SEA  | Strategic Environmental Assessment     |
| SEBC | St Edmundsbury Borough Council         |
| SoS  | Secretary of State                     |
| SPD  | Supplementary Planning Document        |
| TPO  | Tree Preservation Order                |

## 6. Glossary

**Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR)** – Tool that Local Planning Authorities use to monitor and review progress towards the delivery of their Local Development Scheme, (LDS).

**Core Strategy** – Outlines the key principles regarding the development and use of land in a Local Planning Authority's area.

**Development Management Policies Document** – This document contains criteria based policies which will be applied to ensure that all development meets the overall vision and strategic policies as set out within the overarching Core Strategy. To a greater or lesser extent these policies will need to be taken into account in the determination of the majority of planning applications.

**Development Plan** - This includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans and the London Plan, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Development Plan Mailing List** – Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury administer a 'shared' mailing list with contact details of all statutory consultees and all other groups and individuals with an interest in the development plan making process.

**Listed Buildings and Conservation Area consent** – There is a requirement for separate permission or consent for applications which are either within a conservation area or which affect a listed building. There are also different publicity requirements for such applications.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** – This sets out a programme for the preparation of Local Plan documents. It is a project management tool that identifies which documents are to be prepared, the various stages required in their production together with a detailed timetable.

**Localism Act** – An Act of Parliament to change the powers of local government in England. The official summary of the Act is: 'To make provision about the functions and procedures of local and certain other Authorities; to make provision about the functions of the Local Commission for Administration in England; to enable the recovery of financial sanctions imposed by the Court of Justice of the European Union on the United Kingdom from local and public authorities; to make provision about local government finance; to make provision about town and country planning, the Community Infrastructure Levy and the authorisation of nationally significant infrastructure projects; to make provision about social and other housing; to make provision about regeneration in London; and for connected purposes.

**Local Plan** – The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority, (LPA), in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the Development Plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current Core Strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be Development Plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

**Local Planning Authority (LPA)** - The public Authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - Designed to consolidate all policy statements, circulars and guidance documents into a single, simpler National Planning Policy Framework. The new Framework is intended to be user-friendly and accessible with clear policies for making robust local and neighbourhood plans and development management decisions.

**Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO)** - An Order made by a Local Planning Authority, (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), through which Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Neighbourhood Plans** – A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area, (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**Planning Service User Group (PLUG)** - PLUG was set up in 2002 to represent the interests of all users of the FHDC Planning Service. Its main aims are to advise and recommend how service improvements can be made and to help develop new ways of meeting our customer requirements. External members of the Group include Town/Parish Councillors, Parish Clerks, local architects and agents, journalists, various interest groups and local residents.

**Pre-application stage** – Discussions may take place and in many cases are welcomed, between the Local Planning Authority and potential applicants before a planning application is submitted. Pre-application discussions can help to clarify the nature of the proposal and can point to the need for additional material to accompany a planning application when it is finally made.

**Proposals Map** – This is a set of maps illustrating where in the District certain policies and proposals apply.

**Shared Services** – In 2010 Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury formally agreed to a shared services structure with a single Chief Executive and Management Team. This new unified structure has seen staff working across the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury council boundaries with the ‘merger’ of certain services and functions.

**Site Specific Allocation Policies** – Policies that relate to the allocation of land for development.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** – Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the formal Development Plan, (see above).



**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** – This is a tool for appraising policies to ensure that they reflect sustainable development objectives. An appraisal is required by legislation for all Local Plans and many SPDs.

**Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)** – the European Strategic Environment Assessment Directive, (2001/42/EC), requires an assessment of certain plans and programmes including those related to planning and land-use.

**The Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2010** – Contains amendments made to the original 1990 order, (below).

**The Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990** – This document specifies our statutory requirements as they relate to publicising applications for development in a Conservation Area or that affect a Listed Building.

**The Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as Amended 2008)** – These are the regulations which govern the preparation of development plan documents and include detail on how we must undertake consultation with the general public and our stakeholders.

**The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (DMPO)** - A consolidated version of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (GDPO). This consolidated Order includes the original Order and all amendments made to it up until 6 April 2010.

**The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (GDPO)** – This was the order that laid down the guidelines that Local Planning Authorities needed to follow in terms of advertising and determining planning applications and appeals procedures etc.

**The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO)** - Has been subject to subsequent amendments but is the principal order setting out classes of development for which a grant of planning permission is automatically given.

**The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013** - Came into force on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and amends the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, (see above).

**The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012** – Came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012. These regulations govern the process by which Local Planning Authorities prepare their development plans and associated documents.

## Appendix A: FHDC/SEBC 'Principal Offices'

The places below are referred to within this SCI as our 'Principal Offices' and are the locations in which we will make our Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents available for public inspection.

### Forest Heath District

District Council Offices,  
College Heath Road,  
**Mildenhall,**  
IP28 7EY

Area Office,  
31 High Street,  
**Brandon,**  
IP27 0AQ

Area Office,  
63 The Guineas,  
**Newmarket,**  
Suffolk,  
CB8 8HT

Information is also made available at Lakenheath, Mildenhall and Newmarket libraries.

### St Edmundsbury Borough

West Suffolk House  
Western Way  
**Bury St Edmunds**  
IP33 3YU  
01284 763233

Borough Offices  
Lower Downs Slade  
**Haverhill**  
CB9 9EE  
01440 702271

Information is also made available at Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Clare, Kedington and Ixworth libraries.