Statement of Community Involvement

A statement of our policy towards public involvement in the Council's decision-making process for planning policy production and planning application determination: if you are interested in getting involved in planning decisions, then this document will explain how you can do that.

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This document describes the Council's policy towards public involvement in the Council's decision-making process for planning policy production and planning applications. However it must be recognised that the nature and the object of consultation must relate to the circumstances which call for it. In interpreting this policy, a mechanistic approach to the requirements of consultation should be avoided; some methods or practices will be appropriate under certain circumstances, but under others will be inappropriate.

The document demonstrates that the County Council is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 in delivering its planning functions, including its responsibilities under the Act's Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to give "due regard" to the needs of groups with protected characteristics.

Community Involvement in Planning Policy Production

Lancashire County Council (the Council) is responsible for development plan functions within its area in respect of minerals and waste developments. As such it prepares and maintains land use planning policies (contained in a Local Plan) and if necessary guidance (contained in a supplementary planning document) on minerals and waste.

The Council carries out this function jointly with Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (the Joint Authorities). Each of the councils that make up the Joint Authorities will have a separate Statement of Community Involvement. This section relates to operations within the administrative boundary of Lancashire County Council.

Although the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be produced jointly, each of the authorities will work independently in respect of development management matters.

Stages of Preparation and Consultation

There will always be at least two stages in the production of any planning document. The key stages are described below. Further information on the stages of plan production, and when they can be expected to occur, can be found on the Council's website and in the adopted Local Development Scheme.

Pre-production

This is an on-going process of evidence gathering and monitoring. The County Council will publish a monitoring report, and a local aggregate assessment and local waste assessment.

As part of this we may seek informal discussions with relevant bodies[[1]](#footnote-1) to develop and update our evidence base to ensure that it remains robust.

Production

We will consult all relevant bodies, to inform issues and develop options. During this stage there may be one or more consultations, depending on the subject matter and the requirements of the regulations[[2]](#footnote-2). If representations are received that raise new issues that have not previously been considered and that result in the need for a significant change in the Local Plan, then there is likely to be a need for a subsequent consultation.

By the end of the production stage the community and all other stakeholders should have had the opportunity to get involved and have their views considered.

Examination

Before the Local Plan can be adopted it must be submitted for independent examination by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The role of the inspector is to carry out an assessment of the soundness[[3]](#footnote-3) of the document and to ensure that it satisfies the requirements for its preparation set out in the relevant regulations. If you have submitted comments you may have the opportunity to address the inspector as part of the examination.

If the examination raises issues that result in the need for a significant change in the Local Plan, in particular if it affects its soundness, then there is likely to be a need for a subsequent consultation.

Methods of Notification and Consultation

At each of these stages the Council will notify relevant bodies of consultations, and listen to what they have to say. The following sections describe the principles that the Council will apply in carrying out consultations; though some may not be applicable at each stage, depending on the nature of the consultation.

Seek comments

* Invite comments on consultation documents at a time in the process when they can inform the process.
* Provide sufficient information to describe the subject matter of the consultation.
* Give notice of consultations in advance.
* Clearly describe start and end dates of the consultation period.
* Clearly describe how to submit comments.
* Provide a number of methods for submitting comments.
* Consider the representations received prior to moving on to the next stage.
* Acknowledge representations that have been received electronically.
* Where appropriate hold staffed public exhibitions, particularly if a proposal is locally controversial.
* Where appropriate hold workshops or focus groups.

Notification of consultation

Notification will be through a combination of direct and indirect methods.

**Direct notification:**

* Seek to identify and contact by email or letter organisations or bodies relevant to the subject matter of the consultation[[4]](#footnote-4). This may include any neighbours adjacent to or considered to be materially affected by a site specific allocation.
* Contact by email or letter all consultees that have asked to be kept informed of minerals and waste documents by requesting to be added to the consultation database.

**Indirect notification:**

* Publish a notice on the Council's website with details of the consultation.
* Produce a notice to be displayed at the deposit points described in Appendix A with details of the consultation, to assist in raising awareness in the general public.
* Produce a notice with details of the consultation to be sent to parish councils, for them to consider whether to display on the parish notice board, to assist in raising awareness in the general public.
* Publish a press release, after direct notifications have been sent out, to assist in raising awareness in the general public.
* Publish an up to date production programme for any minerals or waste planning documents in production in the Local Development Scheme, with a description of any delays or updates on the Council's website, so individuals and businesses will have the opportunity to determine at which stage they should participate in policy production.

Maintain database of interested persons

* We will maintain a database of people who wish to be notified of minerals and waste planning policy matters.
* Contact preferences will be recorded (letter/email)
* Consultation documents will include a reference to the database, where individuals and organizations will be invited to register on the database to receive future notifications.
* Persons or organisations who would like to be involved in the preparation of minerals and waste documents may request to be placed on this database by the Council at LMWF@lancashire.gov.uk or by sending their details to address below:

Planning and Environment

Lancashire County Council

County Hall

Pitt Street

Preston

PR1 0LD

Transparent process

* Produce an outcomes report summarising the comments received during a consultation, and describing how they have been addressed by the drafting process.
* Produce documents using easy to understand language, especially summary information.
* Maintain a central webpage, acting as a directory, with links to past stages.
* Include a timeline setting out past and future stages of production within consultation documents.
* Produce a newsletter, for circulation to consultees registered on the database, summarising the future and past programme of minerals and waste documents, so individuals and businesses will have the opportunity to determine at which stage they should participate in policy production.

Accessible process

* Provide different methods of viewing consultation documents, including paper copies at deposit points throughout the County (more information on deposit points is provided in Appendix A), and online.
* Provide different means of commenting on consultation documents, including post, email and online.
* Be mindful of document size (including digital file size) when producing consultation material.
* Provide contact details on consultation documents to enable consultees to resolve any queries raised by the consultation documents.
* Produce documents using a readable font, size and colour.
* Maps, charts or drawings to be accompanied by descriptive text or described fully in accompanying text.
* Hold staffed public exhibitions at accessible locations, at accessible times, close to populations affected; using a greeter where possible to identify the specific needs of individual consultees.

Community Involvement in Planning Applications

Lancashire County Council (the Council) is responsible for development management functions within its area in respect of 'county matters'. County matters may be defined as:

* Minerals development including the winning and working of minerals and the carrying out of mineral exploration activities;
* Waste development, including development designed to be used principally for treating and storing waste, the sorting, processing or recycling of waste, the disposal of refuse/waste materials, the use of waste for generating renewable energy;

In addition the County Council also has development management powers for any development it proposes to carry out itself or in conjunction with another party. This can include applications for school extensions, the provision of new schools, development associated with social services, libraries and museums, the construction of new highways or other transport infrastructure, the erection of visitor and interpretation centres in country parks and improvements to the public rights of way network across Lancashire.

Planning applications to carry out development in respect of county matter development or its own development must be submitted to, and are determined by the Council unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of State. The main policy frameworks for determining applications are:

* The Lancashire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy
* The Lancashire Minerals and Waste Site Allocation and Development Management Policies
* District Local Plans
* Neighbourhood Plans
* National Planning Policy Framework

This section sets out the principles for community involvement for planning applications that will be determined by the Council. These will form the basis of guidance for applicants with regard to community engagement and consultation, and will be in addition to existing consultation and publicity practises employed by the Council once a valid planning application is received.

Pre-application

The Council encourages applicants to engage in pre-application discussions with planning officers. The focus of these discussions is to provide the applicant with guidance relating to the information required for proper consideration of the application, the relevant policies, and comments on the design and likely acceptability of the proposals. It is when key issues and policies that the applicants' proposals should take into account are identified.

The Development Management group actively engages in pre-application discussions with every applicant or agent who requests them. At the time of discussion, the applicant and a planning officer discuss the proposals in full, and consider both the extent of consultation required and other details relating to the application. Throughout the discussion, advice given will be as accurate and objective as possible, but will also be informal and will reflect the individual case officer's interpretation of planning policy. Advice given cannot be interpreted as being indicative of the outcome of the application. A charge for the advice will be made in relation to County matter proposals in accordance with a charging policy depending on the type of advice sought.

Proposals that are likely to have significant effects upon the environment may require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before the Council makes a decision. The need for an EIA will be discussed in the pre-application advice and if necessary the applicant advised to apply for a formal EIA screening opinion , along with the need for a scoping opinion if EIA will be required. Where a screening opinion is requested (a determination of whether or not a development should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment), this is provided in accordance with the time periods set out in regulations[[5]](#footnote-5).

At this time, the applicant will be made aware that the Council may take 16 weeks to deal with planning applications accompanied by an Environment Statement (13 weeks for a 'major' application without an EIA).

Early Community Consultation

During any pre-application meeting with the planning officers, the consultation requirements for the application will be discussed. If an application is considered to be potentially contentious, wider scale public consultation by the developer may be recommended before the planning application is submitted. The purpose of such consultation would be to allow the developer to explain their initial ideas and to obtain the views of the local community and stakeholders and to allow the proposals to be amended to address any comments received.

There are several ways that an applicant could further involve the community including:

* Circulating leaflets to residents that outline draft proposals.
* Arranging meetings or exhibitions with community and other local interest groups.

Such an approach brings benefits to all those involved by allowing accurate information to be presented to the community. In addition, by making provision for amendments early in the process, the applicant may avoid the inconvenience of having to make substantial amendments to an application after it is submitted.

The Council cannot refuse to validate a planning application purely on the basis that the applicant has failed to carry out pre-application community engagement.

Public Meetings and Exhibitions

For larger scale or controversial proposals, the Council may recommend that the applicant holds public meetings or exhibitions. When arranging these events, the applicant may wish to consider the following:

* Publicity: This could be in form of letters to householders or an advert/press release in the local press giving adequate notice, posters in the locale and prior notification to the Parish and any local interest groups.
* Venue - Location: It would be beneficial if the event were held on the application site/building, or at a venue as close as possible to the application site.
* Venue - Accessibility: To allow as wide a sector of the community to attend as possible, venues should be fully accessible. Alternatively, reasonable adjustments to be more inclusive of the needs of people with disabilities should be made,or provide transport.
* Timing of Event: Events should take place at a time that enable a wide cross section of the public to attend, including weekends and evenings.
* Presentation Material: Should be clear and easily understandable and in a choice of formats – hard copies or disc. Web sites where information can be accessed would be useful.
* Communication: provision of a quiet area to discuss issues with representatives, induction loops or infra-red facilities for those hard of hearing, and consideration of the needs of specific local communities, including the deaf community and those with English as a second language.

Consultation Statement

Applicants are encouraged to submit a consultation statement with their planning application, which sets out the community engagement already undertaken, including:

* The scale of the notification, including a list of properties and businesses contacted; List of interest/community groups or other organisation contacted;
* Location and duration of any events held;
* Summary of all the comments received and issues raised;
* A clear indication of how the proposal has been amended to address any comments and a justification why any comments have not resulted in amendments to the proposal;
* Any comments by groups or individuals about the public engagement process.

The applicant should retain all consultation responses as a record of the measures they have undertaken to ensure effective community involvement. The information gathered may be included in the officer's report when the application is submitted for determination.

Any information that is submitted containing the results of any community consultation must have regard to the General Data Protection Regulations and the need to maintain the privacy of any individual who has responded to a consultation.

Planning Applications

There are certain statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications which are set out in the General Development Procedure Order 2015. The requirements depend on the scale and nature of the development proposed. Consultation and notification procedures currently employed by the Council are outlined below:

* For major applications, the proposals will be publicised by displaying notices at the proposed site and also a notice in the local press: These notices contain details of how the application can be viewed, and how to make and submit comments and the time period within which to do so. The County Council will also write to neighbouring properties and occupiers.
* For minor applications, the publicity will be by way of a site notice and letters to neighbouring properties and occupiers.
* The extent of the neighbour notification is a matter of planning judgement for the County Council and will depend upon the nature of the proposal and its likely impacts.
* Consultation with other groups: The bodies and organisations the Council is required to consult are set out in planning legislation and regulations. At a local level, the Council must always consult the district and parish council within whose administrative boundary the development is proposed. In addition, contact is made with any interest groups.
* Elected Members: All county councillors whose division includes the application site are informed.

Accessing Planning Application information:

* The primary route for accessing planning applications and associated information is through the County Council's Development Management webpage. <https://planningregister.lancashire.gov.uk/> This includes an electronic register of new applications, updates on current applications and decisions taken.
* Anyone that does not have internet access is encouraged to contact the case officer where other arrangements can be discussed to explain the application and its likely impacts. Local libraries may also have a computer which is available for use by members of public and where planning application details can be accessed.
* Any representations received are summarised in the officer report on the application which is either presented to the Committee for determination or determined by a Chief Officer in accordance with the county council's scheme of delegation.

The scheme of delegation for determining planning applications applies in the following circumstances:-

* Where there are no objections from any consultee or following the publicity process
* Where the application is not accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment
* Where no County Councillor has requested that the application comes before the Development Control Committee
* Where the Chief Officer is not responsible for the functions of the applicant and local planning authority where a conflict of interest would arise.

If any of the above applies, the planning application must be determined by the County Council's Development Control Committee. Any application that is recommended for refusal must also be determined by the Development Control Committee

Development Control Committee

The Development Control Committee determines planning applications. The committee is comprised of 12 councillors and meets approximately every six weeks at County Hall in Preston.

The people who can usually speak at meetings are:

* Anyone objecting to the planning application.
* Anyone in favour of the proposal (usually the applicant).

Persons wishing to speak are limited to 15 in favour and 15 in objection. Further information in relation to speaking at the Development Control Committee can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/planning/have-your-say-about-a-planning-application/protocol-for-speaking-at-the-development-control-committee/>

Each person will be limited to three minutes.

Once the committee has determined a planning application, a decision notice will normally be issued within three working days from the date of the committee resolution. Details of planning applications and decisions are available on the Council's dedicated webpages at [www.lancashire.gov.uk/planningregister](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/planningregister)

Appendix A - List of Deposit Points

For details of opening times or specific enquiries about your local library the Lancashire Library Service can be contacted on **0300 123 6703**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Settlement** | **Facility** | **Contact Number** |
| **Accrington** | **Accrington Library**  St James Street  BB5 1NQ |  |
| **Hyndburn Council Offices**  Scaitcliffe House  Ormerod Street  BB5 0PF | 01254 388111 |
| **Adlington** | **Adlington Library**  Railway Road  PR6 9RG |  |
| **Ansdell** | **Ansdell Library**  59 Commonside  Ansdell  FY8 4DJ |  |
| **Bacup** | **Bacup Library**  St James  Square  OL13 9AH |  |
| **Rossendale BC One Stop Shop**  The Business Centre  Futures Park  Bacup  OL13 0BB | 01706 217777 |
| **Bamber Bridge** | **Bamber Bridge Library**  Station Road  PR5 6LA |  |
| **Barnoldswick** | **Barnoldswick Library**  Fernlea Ave  BB18 5DW |  |
| **Barrowford** | **Barrowford Library**  Ann Street  BB9 8QH |  |
| **Bolton-le-Sands** | **Bolton-le-Sands Library**  Main Road  LA5 8DN |  |
| **Brierfield** | **Brierfield Library**  Colne Road  BB9 5HW |  |
| **Burnley** | **Burnley Council Offices**  Town Hall  Manchester Road  BB11 9SA | 01282 425011 |
| **Burnley Library**  Grimshaw Street  BB11 2BD |  |
| **Burnley Campus Library**  Barden Lane  BB10 1JD |  |
| **Coal Clough Library**  Coal Clough Lane  BB11 4NW |  |
| **Burscough** | **Burscough Library**  Mill Lane  L40 5TJ |  |
| **Carnforth** | **Carnforth Library**  Lancaster Road  LA5 9DZ |  |
| **Chorley** | **Chorley Council Civic Offices**  Union Street  PR7 1AL | 01257 515151 |
| **Clayton Green Library**  Clayton Green Business Park  Library Road  PR6 7EN |  |
| **Chorley Library**  Union Street  PR7 1EB |  |
| **Coppull Library**  Spendmore Lane  [PR7 5DF](http://www.bing.com/maps/default.aspx?cp=53.6207~-2.667037&where1=Coppull%20Library&ss=ypid.YN1029x11272194543031840822) |  |
| **Cleveleys** | **Cleveleys Library**  Rossall Road, Thornton-Cleveleys,  FY5 1EE |  |
| **Clitheroe** | **Ribble Valley BC Council offices**  Church walk  BB7 2RA | 01200 425111 |
| **Clitheroe Library**  Church Street  BB7 2DG |  |
| **Colne** | **Colne Town Hall**  Albert Road  BB8 0AQ | 01282 661224 |
| **Colne Library**  High Street Earls  CO6 2PA |  |
| **Earby** | **Earby Community Centre**  New Road  BB18 6XA |  |
| **Eccleston** | **The Carrington Centre**  The Green  PR7 5TE |  |
| **Euxton** | **Euxton Library**  [St Marys Gate](http://www.bing.com/maps/default.aspx?cp=53.66914~-2.676914&where1=Euxton%20Library&ss=ypid.YN1081x197032100" \o ")  [PR7 6](http://www.bing.com/maps/default.aspx?cp=53.66914~-2.676914&where1=Euxton%20Library&ss=ypid.YN1081x197032100" \o ")AH |  |
| **Fence** | **Library and Village Hall**  Wheatley Close  BB12 9QH |  |
| **Fleetwood** | **Fleetwood Library**  North Albert Street  FY7 6AJ |  |
| **Freckleton** | **Freckleton Library**  Preston Old Road  PR4 1PB |  |
| **Fulwood** | **Fulwood Library**  294 Garstang Road  Preston  PR2 9RX |  |
| **Sharoe Green Library**  8 Sharoe Green Lane  PR2 8ED |  |
| **Garstang** | **Garstang Library**  Windsor Road  PR3 1ED |  |
| **Great Harwood** | **Great Harwood Library**  Queen Street  BB6 7AL |  |
| **Halton** | **Halton Library**  Penny Stone Road  LA2 6QE |  |
| **Haslington** | **Haslington Library**  Deardengate  BB4 5QL |  |
| **Heysham** | **Heysham Library**  396-398 Heysham Road  LA3 2BJ |  |
| **Ingol** | **Ingol Library**  Ventnor Place, off Tag Lane  PR2 3YX |  |
| **Kirkham** | **Kirkham Library**  Station Road  PR4 2HD |  |
| **Knott End-on-Sea** | **Knott End Library**  26 Lancaster Rd  FY6 0AU |  |
| **Lancaster** | **Lancaster Council Customer Service Centre**  Town Hall, Dalton Square  LA1 1PJ | 01524 582000 |
| **Lancaster Library**  Market Square  LA1 1HY |  |
| **Leyland** | **South Ribble Borough Council**  Civic Centre  West Paddock  PR25 1DH | 01772 421491 |
| **Leyland Library**  Lancastergate  PR25 2EX |  |
| **Longridge** | **Longridge Library**  Berry Lane  PR3 3JA |  |
| **Longton** | **Longton Library**  Liverpool Old Road  PR4 5HA |  |
| **Lostock Hall** | **Lostock Hall Library**  Watkin Lane  PR5 5TU |  |
| **Lytham** | **Lytham Assembly Rooms**  Dicconson Terrace  Lytham St Annes  FY8 5JY |  |
| **Mellor** | **Mellor Library**  St Mary's Gardens  BB2 7JW |  |
| **Morecambe** | **Morecambe Town Hall**  Marine Road  LA4 5AF |  |
| **Morecambe Library**  Central Drive  LA4 5DL |  |
| **Nelson** | **Nelson Library**  Market Sq.  BB9 7PU |  |
| **Ormskirk** | **Ormskirk Library**  Burscough St  L39 2EN |  |
| **Oswaldtwistle** | **Oswaldtwistle Library**  Union Road  BB5 3HS |  |
| **Padiham** | **Padiham Library**  Town Hall  Burnley Road  BB12 8BS |  |
| **Parbold** | **Parbold Library**  The Common  WN8 7EA |  |
| **Penwortham** | **Town** **Hall**  Burnley Road  BB12 8BS | 01282 682705 |
| **Penwortham** | **Kingsfold Library**  Hawksbury Drive  PR1 9EJ |  |
| **Pike Hill** | **Pike Hill Library**  Langwyth Road  BB10 3JX |  |
| **Poulton-le-Fylde** | **Wyre Borough Council**  Civic Centre  Breck Road  FY6 7PU | 01253 891000 |
| **Poulton Library**  Blackpool Old Road,  FY6 7DH |  |
| **Preston** | **Lancashire County Council offices**  County Hall  Pitt Street  PR1 8XJ | 0845 0530000 |
| **Preston City Council Offices**  Town Hall  Lancaster Road  PR1 2RL | 01772 906900 |
| **Harris Library**  Market Square  PR1 2PP |  |
| **Rawtenstall** | **Rawtenstall Library**  Queen's Square  BB4 6QU |  |
| **Ribbleton** | **Ribbleton Library**  Ribbleton Hall Drive  PR2 6EE |  |
| **Rishton** | **Rishton Library**  High Street  BB1 4LA |  |
| **Saint Annes** | **Council Offices**  292 Clifton Drive South  FY8 1LH | 01253 658 658 |
| **St Annes Library**  254 Clifton Drive South  FY8 1NR |  |
| **Savick** | **Savick Library**  West Park Avenue  PR2 1UH |  |
| **Silverdale** | **Silverdale Library**  Emesgate Lane  LA5 0RA |  |
| **Skelmersdale** | **Skelmersdale Library**  Southway  WN8 6NL |  |
| **Tarleton** | **Tarleton Library**  Mark Square  PR4 6TU |  |
| **Thornton-Cleveleys** | **Thornton Library**  Victoria Road East  FY5 3SZ |  |
| **Trawden** | **Trawden Community Library**  Church Street  BB8 8RU |  |
| **Whalley** | **Whalley Library**  Abbey Road  BB7 9RS |  |
| **Whitworth** | **Whitworth Library**  Lloyd Street  OL12 8AA |  |
| **Whitworth Town Council Offices**  Civic Hall (The Riverside)  Market Street  OL12 8DP | 01706 852018 |
| For details of opening times or specific enquiries about your local library the Lancashire Library Service can be contacted on **0300 123 6703** | | |

1. Who constitutes the relevant bodies is likely to vary depending on the nature of the subject matter and the stage of the documents production. They are likely to include relevant government bodies, charities, elected representatives, local authorities, businesses, landowners, interest groups, the public, including hard-to-reach groups, and those in neighbouring authorities or further afield where materially affected. Some of these are prescribed under the regulations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Principally the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A definition of soundness can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Who we notify directly is likely to vary depending on the subject matter of the consultation and the stage of the documents production. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)