



Purpose and scope

1 Do you agree that the purpose and scope of the guidance is clear?

Yes

Please comment on your answer (particularly if you do not agree).:

We broadly agree with the purpose & scope of this consultation. Good, effective community engagement can aid investors, developers and their advisers to understand the perspectives of communities in an area ahead of considering a proposal. This will aid the construction of major planning applications and inform developers, investors and their advisers on the key issues and stakeholders relevant to a particular location.

There is a view that this should help the planning service itself. The consultation mentions it will be used 'as a sense check' for the planning authorities but developers and investors also have an interest in better community engagement for the local development plan, because the LDP forms an integral part of the planning process.

Levels of engagement

2 Do you agree that the terms inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower, as described in the table, are helpful terms to support understanding of different levels of engagement and the influence that results from it?

No

Please comment on your answer (particularly if you do not agree). :

We agree with almost but not all of these descriptions. Our point of disagreement really relates to the Empower aspect. Ultimately it will be the elected members of the planning authority who will at least initially determine an application. We do not see therefore how we can agree with the phrase 'to place final decision-making in the hands of the participants' as accurate. It is important that community engagement is not just about promising anything and everything - authorities will be managing expectations from a range of statutory, community and industry stakeholders. If there is no appropriate management of expectations in community engagement for local development plans by the local authority, then this will lead to likely discontent with the system as a whole. We also believe there should be a framework adopted for community groups for fair representation and a diverse public participation.

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Stage by stage engagement

3 Do you agree that the appropriate levels of engagement have been identified for the stages of local development plan preparation?

Yes

Please comment on your answer (particularly if you do not agree).:

This amply demonstrates the complexity and time/financial resources that could well be involved for a community. It would be helpful to ensure that authorities inform communities at an early stage about key - potentially insurmountable statutory interests in relation to LDPs issues within their area.

For example, point to SEPA flooding plans or more site-specific, if there is a particular decontamination issue on a derelict site that a community may not be aware of. Neither communities nor local authorities would wish local place plans to be invested in by the community if there was a 'game-stopping' issue tied to that part of an emerging LDP. This would be the same for a developer or investor who may be interested in a site expected to be part of an

upcoming LDP.

4 Do you agree that the appropriate levels of engagement have been identified for the impact assessments?

Yes

Please comment on your answer (particularly if you do not agree).:

Further consultation questions

5 Overall, is the approach set out in the guidance helpful?

No view

Please comment on your answer (Particularly if you do not think the approach is helpful).:

6 Do you have any views about the initial conclusions of the impact assessments that accompany and inform this guidance?

Yes

Please comment on your answer (particularly if you do have views to share).:

The more effective and informed community engagement on LDPs can become, the better the expected LDP outcome. For developers too it will be helpful to be made aware of

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community interests as the LDP emerges. This could support major planning applications to start from an informed basis of community perspectives ahead of formal pre-planning application requirements.

7 Thinking about the potential impacts of the guidance – will these help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and foster good community relations, in particular for people with protected characteristics?

No view

Please comment on your answer.:

8 Do you have evidence that can further inform the impact assessments that accompany this guidance, in particular in relation to the impact

of the guidance on people with protected characteristics, businesses and costs to businesses?

Yes

Please comment on your answer. :

We broadly support the proposals within this consultation; however, we believe that community engagement and public participation forms an intrinsic part of the wider planning process and developers invest in these processes and to secure investment and promote development it should be a less time taking and simple process. The guidance should not over-promise or over-complicate the existing process.

9 Please provide any further comments on the guidance set out in this consultation.

Please provide your comments here.:

The modern planning system is highly complex and involves considerable costs in terms of assessment, studies and fees. For major applicants, effective community engagement at the LDP stage, supported by the planning authority should support an informed debate on the potential of a site, including new build sites, or the rehabilitation of older buildings into new or upgraded uses.

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