

# Community Involvement Plan – September 2019

For the:

- **Draft Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Regulation 18) and the accompanying**
  - **Sustainability Appraisal**
  - **Habitats Regulations Assessment**
  - **Equalities Impact Assessment**

## 1. Background

The Site Allocations DPD is a daughter document to the Mid Sussex District Plan, which was adopted in March 2018. The District Plan sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved, covering the period up to 2031. The District Plan sets out the district's housing and employment requirements. Whilst the majority of this requirement has already been planned for, there is still a residual need that must be found – the role of the Site Allocations DPD is to allocate sufficient housing, employment and other sites in order to ensure the need identified in the District Plan is met.

The purpose of this Community Involvement Plan is to set out:

- Who is involved in the production and consultation of the Site Allocations DPD;
- Why people are being involved in the process;
- When and how people will be able to get involved and influence the Site Allocations DPD; and
- How the results of community involvement will be used.

This Community Involvement Plan has been written in accordance with the adopted Mid Sussex District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019).<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Who is to be involved?

### Early engagement

In the SCI, the Council commits to 'front load' consultation activity, to identify potential issues and options. This work has assisted in the formulation of policies, and has informed and updated the evidence base. Early engagement with stakeholders has been sought from the very start of the process of producing the Site Allocations DPD, including:

- Oversight of the DPD's preparation has been led by elected Councillors through the Site Allocations Document Members Working Group.<sup>2</sup>
- Town and Parish Councils have been briefed and consulted in relation to the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and methodology for the site selection.
- A Developers Liaison Group, which includes representatives from across the development industry, was also established and consulted in relation to the SHELAA and methodology for site selection.
- Neighbouring Local Authorities and County Authorities; as a result, the District Council has been able to enter into Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) with neighbouring authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci](http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci).

<sup>2</sup> See the Terms of Reference in Site Selection Paper 1 (Appendix 1) for more information about the Working Group, available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/#topic-site-allocations-document>

- External organisations, such as the High Weald AONB Unit. It is the Council's intention to invite relevant public bodies to enter into SoCGs.
- Consulting other statutory consultees, such as Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

SoCGs prepared for the Site Allocations Document provide an update on agreement's made in relation to the District Plan, and focus on the issues arising from the allocation of sites. Further information about early engagement during the preparation of the Site Allocation Document, and details of SoCGs will be included in a Duty to Cooperate Statement to accompany the DPD, and will be made available on the Council's website.<sup>3</sup>

### **Including everyone**

The Equality Impacts Assessment (EqIA) that accompanies the DPD considers the needs of people classified as having 'protected characteristics'.<sup>4</sup> This assessment concludes that there are a number of future actions to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with the consultation, and particularly in terms of removing barriers of involvement for protected groups.

In terms of consultation, the Council must continue to promote consultation exercises that are inclusive of all, including engagement with representative organisations and monitoring of the consultation. This consideration includes things like making documents available on the website, which is equipped with 'BrowseAloud' to make the website more accessible.

There is further analysis of consultation practices and the actions that will be taken to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with the consultation included within the EqIA which accompanies the Site Allocations DPD.<sup>5</sup>

### **Who will be contacted?**

A number of groups will be directly contacted and asked for their comments. These are:

- District Councillors;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- 'Specific consultation bodies'/'general consultation bodies' (statutory consultees) as set out in legislation.<sup>6</sup> These include West Sussex County Council, adjoining local planning authorities, service providers and government agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, and the South Downs National Park Authority;<sup>7</sup>
- Other organisations, groups or individuals that may have an interest in the Site Allocations DPD. These include members of the Mid Sussex Partnership, voluntary services' associations, residents' associations, housing associations, business groups and associations, environmental, countryside and conservation groups, youth and elderly persons' groups and the development industry;
- Representatives of those groups highlighted as requiring targeted consultation by the EqIA;
- Subscribers to the Planning Policy e-mail alerts service<sup>8</sup>; and
- Internal consultees at the District Council.

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/#topic-site-allocations-document>

<sup>4</sup> As defined by the *Equality Act 2010*

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/#topic-site-allocations-document>

<sup>6</sup> *The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)*

<sup>7</sup> Details of these groups are set out in the 'Key Contacts List' available at: [www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci](http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci).

<sup>8</sup> To receive news and updates on policy documents being prepared please sign up to our email alerts at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/consultation-monitoring/#topic-planning-policy-email-alerts>

Elected District Councillors have a key role to play in forming the Site Allocations DPD and will be fully involved in the process through:

- The Site Allocations Document Members Working Group;
- The Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth (any District Councillor can attend and request to speak);
- Full Council (consists of all District Councillors); and
- Councillors will be directly informed and can respond during the public consultation period.

### **3. Why are people being involved?**

We are asking for people's views on the Site Allocations DPD through a formal consultation period. It is important to seek input from the wider public, as the Plan will allocate sites for development in the district and include planning policies that will have an impact upon both the existing and future communities of Mid Sussex.

Responses to the consultation will provide a valuable source of information which will inform the final policies. All representations received through the consultation will be carefully reviewed by officers. A consultation report summarising the issues raised by consultation and how these comments have been used will be published on the Council's website and will be considered by the Council before the next stage in the plan-making process.

In order to make the consultation more meaningful, it is important that people understand the context within which the DPD has been drafted and that certain aspects of the Plan may not be able to be changed as a result of consultation:

- At this time comments can only be made on the Site Allocations DPD draft plan (Regulation 18), and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, and EqlA.
- The Site Allocations DPD has been written in line with Government planning policy and guidance, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Planning Practice Guidance.
- The Site Allocations DPD has been written in accordance with legislation and regulations.<sup>9</sup>
- The Site Allocations DPD has been informed by the results of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. This shows which options have been considered for its strategy and policies and why the options chosen are preferred over those rejected.
- The Site Allocations DPD has been informed by background evidence. The background evidence (and any updates) will be made available to view on the Council's website.

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<sup>9</sup> *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, and other relevant legislation.

#### 4. When will people be involved?

<b>Public Consultation on 'Preferred Options' draft plan (Regulation 18)</b>	<p>Following agreement by the Council in September 2019, the Site Allocations DPD will be published for a six-week consultation period from 9/10/19 to 20/11/19. During this time, the public can make representations on the Site Allocations DPD.</p> <p>Representation made during this consultation and recommend changes to the DPD will be considered by the Council before the next stage in the plan-making process.</p>
<b>Public Consultation prior to plan submission for examination (Regulation 19)</b>	<p>This stage presents another opportunity for public engagement. There will be a six-week public consultation period, scheduled for Spring 2020. Representations made during this consultation will be considered by the Planning Inspector appointed to carry out the Public Examination.</p> <p>Please note, the examination timetable is subject to change and could be affected by a range of factors, including the availability of the Planning Inspector.</p> <p>Further details of the Regulation 19 consultation will be updated in due course; a new Community Involvement Plan will be produced to accompany this stage of the plan.</p>

Further details of the timetable are available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/#topic-site-allocations-document>

#### 5. How will people be involved?

The consultation will be open to all and we will seek to inform and receive comment from the widest possible range of people. We will:

- Send out a press release, an email alert and utilise social media;
- Put all the details and documentation on the Council's website including an on-line response form. All on-line material will be compatible with 'BrowseAloud' for people who find it difficult to read on-line;
- Utilise electronic methods wherever possible in addition to traditional methods to make it as easy as possible to respond to the consultation;
- A translation service is available to those for whom English is a second language;
- Provide hard copies of the Site Allocations DPD to view at the District's libraries (including the mobile library); District Council, Town and Parish Council offices; help points;
- Send letters or emails to all the 'specific consultation bodies' (statutory consultees) and to all the other organisations listed in section 2 above.
- Static exhibitions will be stationed at libraries in the District, as well as at Mid Sussex District Council Offices; event details will be made available at <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/#topic-site-allocations-document>

Comments must be submitted in writing (physical or digital) and cannot be accepted as anonymous. All information received is public information, subject to relevant data protection legislation.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Such as the *Data Protection Act (2018)*

Comments can be submitted via the website, email or by post. A response form will be made available which can be completed and submitted on the MSDC website. All responses can also be returned by:

Post to: Planning Policy, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS

E-mail to: [ldfconsultation@midsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ldfconsultation@midsussex.gov.uk)

## **6. What happens to the results?**

All comments will be treated equally and it will be up to the Council to balance any conflicting opinions when considering the final document.

The effectiveness of the consultation and the level of involvement by people, particularly those classified as having 'protected characteristics'<sup>11</sup> and requiring particular consideration will be monitored, as detailed in the EqIA. This information will also inform future consultation work.<sup>12</sup>

A consultation report summarising the issues raised by consultation and how these comments have been used will be published on the Council's website and will be considered by the Council. An email notification that this report has been published will be sent to all statutory consultees, Planning Policy email alert subscribers and respondents who submitted a response and expressed a wish to be notified and provided a valid email address.

If you have any comments or queries on this Community Involvement Plan, please contact Jacob Lane ([jacob.lane@midsussex.gov.uk](mailto:jacob.lane@midsussex.gov.uk); (01444) 477068).

If you have a comment or concern with your experience of a Council-led community involvement exercise, you should in the first instance contact the officer detailed in the Community Involvement Plan. Alternatively, you can contact the Customer Services and Communications Team by phone (01444) 477478 or by writing to Customer Services and Communications, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS.

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<sup>11</sup> As defined by the *Equality Act 2010*

<sup>12</sup> This information will be used solely for this purpose. Equalities information will be kept strictly confidential. All data is subject to the *Data Protection Act (2018)*.