

Agenda Item No: 5

Report To: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 25th JUNE 2013

Report Title: Communication and Consultation Strategy for the Core Strategy Review

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Summary:	<p>Following the Update report on communications to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March this year, it was agreed that representatives of the Planning Department be invited to a future meeting to discuss the communication and consultation strategy for the Core Strategy Review (Local Plan 2030).</p> <p>This report sets out some of the issues and challenges in getting a broad and representative public response to the major planning issues that the Plan will address and highlights some of the communication methods and techniques we are currently employing.</p>
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Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: All Wards

Recommendation: **The Committee be asked to note the content of the report.**

Policy Overview: The current Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 and is currently in the process of being reviewed to have an end date of 2030. It will form the main planning policy document for the Council and govern decisions on new development across the borough.

Financial Implications: None

Risk Assessment NO

Equalities Impact Assessment NO

Other Material Implications: None

Background Papers: None

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Report Title: Communication and consultation strategy for the Core Strategy Review

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides a follow up to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in March where Members indicated that they were concerned with the communications strategy for the Core Strategy Review (Local Plan 2030) and were keen to understand more about how we intend to generate public interest in the plan-making process.

Background

2. The requirements for consultation when a Local Planning authority is creating a new Plan are set out in Government Regulations. Despite the raft of recent changes to the planning system over the last few years, these Regulations have remained reasonably consistent, and if anything, more recent revisions have generally reduced the overall requirement to consult or have placed the onus on the LPA to decide for itself when consultation is necessary.
3. However, the Government has also introduced a new legal 'Duty to Co-operate' in plan-making, where LPAs are required to demonstrate that they have fully liaised and discussed their emerging plans with neighbouring local authorities and other statutory organisations such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, Environment Agency, Homes & Communities Agency, Highways Agency, etc. The 'Duty' doesn't extend to issues of consultation with the general public.
4. Set alongside these regulatory requirements is the 'localism' theme, where communities are encouraged to take the initiative in determining the future of their areas and, specifically, the concept of formal Neighbourhood Plans has been introduced to allow plan-making to be undertaken by communities at a very local level. Only Wye with Hinxhill and Rolvenden parishes are pursuing this option in the borough at the present time.

What do we normally do ?

5. In recent years, as the Council has produced a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), our approach to public consultation has been based on the methods and principles set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI was first adopted in 2006 and revised in 2009. A further revision is currently being drafted and is scheduled to soon be considered by the Cabinet. The 2009 version is appended for information.
6. The SCI goes a considerable way beyond the minimum requirements for consultation in plan-making set down in the Regulations and generally accepts that we will include a series of 'informal' stages of public consultation

depending on the nature and / or location of the issues involved. As we have an adopted SCI, we are then obliged to carry out our consultation in accordance with it, irrespective of whether we already meet the minimum regulatory requirements.

7. The SCI also sets out some of the consultation techniques that we would normally use. In all cases, we publish the document for consultation on the Council's website and an e-mail is automatically sent to all parties who are logged on our consultee database to advise them that a consultation has begun. In addition, a notice is placed in the local newspaper and the relevant documents are made available to view at the libraries in the borough and at the Gateways in Ashford and Tenterden as well as the Civic Centre.
8. However, again depending on the issues involved, in order to supplement the consultation process, there may be a series of exhibitions – staffed or unstaffed - in accessible locations (County Square is often used for example) either during the consultation period or whilst the plan is still emerging. We will seek to publicise these events in advance with help from the Communications Team and external partners, such as a Parish Council, so that people know when they are being held.
9. Comments from the public can be captured from a variety of means. We do encourage people to respond to consultations via our consultation portal, on the website but we will readily accept e-mailed or written comments which are then manually scanned onto the system. These are then available to view for everyone once the consultation period has closed.

What are the Challenges ?

10. Our long experience of plan-making in the borough tells us that there are always some difficult challenges in making consultation as broad and inclusive as possible whilst not spending a fortune on it. These can usually be summarised as follows :-
 - Planning can be highly technical – can it be presented more simply without reducing complex arguments to over-simplified debate ?
 - General apathy or lack of awareness, until a 'threat' is perceived
 - Reaching different parts of the community
 - Consultation 'fatigue'
11. In general, it is probably reasonable to say that local reaction and involvement to planning applications tends to be a lot greater than for plan documents and yet it is often the Plan that will have already set the principle for the determination of the application. Applications are inevitably more site specific and are seen as an indication that something is going to happen soon, whereas Plans are sometimes perceived as much longer-term in their potential impact.
12. This experience suggests that the site-specific elements in plan-making need to be better communicated so that people are aware of proposals and understand that this is the stage when the principle for a development coming forward can be established, rather than waiting for the subsequent planning application to come along.

13. It was with these challenges in mind that we have sought to adapt our consultation strategy for the Core Strategy Review process and this is explained in more detail below.

Plan-it Ashford

14. Drawing on a best practice model used for Winchester's Local Plan, Plan-it Ashford was launched in August last year as a means of engaging directly with local communities across the borough at the earliest possible stage of the Local Plan's preparation. We initially wrote directly to every parish council and urban forum inviting them to participate and have subsequently extended invitations to different community or interest groups.
15. The intention behind the Plan-it exercise was to get local communities to identify the things they particularly liked or disliked about their areas and to identify any challenges they thought would need to be addressed over forthcoming years. A set of animated 'characters' was devised to represent different elements of each local community so that people could be encouraged to consider not only their own needs but those of others in their neighbourhood.
16. Since the end of 2012, the Policy Team has been heavily engaged in facilitating discussions with a wide range of groups and organisations (see Appendix 1). These have sometimes involved just local parish councillors and sometimes members of the wider general public and we are continuing to meet new groups all the time.
17. The exercise has been undertaken with a consciously wide remit. Facilitators have emphasised that any comments are welcome, whether specifically planning-related or not (and thus a broader knowledge of planning is not required). The agenda is very much set by the local participants and it has consciously focused on local issues as these are the ones that people can generally recognise and articulate much more freely about.
18. The initiative has been widely welcomed by those groups who we have met and hopefully is seen as a demonstrable example of localism in action. However, we have been at pains to emphasise that we may not be able to address all the issues raised in the Local Plan and that there should be an on-going dialogue with communities to discuss what can and cannot be achieved in due course.
19. The exercise has shown the value that local organisations can play in communicating information from the Borough Council. Parish Councils and Urban Forums can and should be encouraged to play a more proactive role in seeking the views of residents within their areas and ensuring that those views are representative. We will continue to use the channels of communication that the Plan-it Ashford exercise has opened up in recent months as the Local Plan preparation moves forward.

Communications today

20. Alongside more traditional forms of communication, we need to consider that today's preferred modes for many people are focused around social media. Although the likes of Twitter and Facebook are perhaps more attuned to 'discussion' rather than commenting as part of a consultation, the council needs to be aware of the potential of these avenues.
21. The Communications team has created a Facebook page called 'Ashford Local Plan' so that comments can be received separately to the council's main Facebook page. This allows for a channel for comments outside of any official 'consultation period'.
22. The power of these media was demonstrated during the evolution of the Urban Sites & Infrastructure DPD when Facebook campaigns around development proposals in Godinton Park and Kennington generated large local responses which were instrumental in influencing the council's final drafting of the Plan. We should have the ability to be proactive in the use of these media to assist in communicating and consulting with a wide audience.

Strategic versus local

23. It is acknowledged that Members were disappointed by the public response to the 'jobs / homes scenarios' consultation that was undertaken at the end of last year. This was the first in what will be several 'informal' consultation events to be held over the course of the Local Plan's preparation and focused on strategic, 'high level' questions of potential jobs and housing targets to 2030.
24. It is inevitable that where a greater level of understanding is necessary to fully engage with the issues being consulted on, and there is no site specific element involved, responses tend to be mainly from the industry itself rather than the general public – which was the case here.
25. This need not invalidate the value of a consultation provided that its context is understood and appreciated. For example, a debate about overall housing and jobs numbers is rooted in the application of different trends and assumptions derived from various studies and other statistics and a technical knowledge about the validity of certain approaches is necessary for an informed view to be formed. However, when the debate starts to focus on 'where' those houses and jobs should go, then local resident and business views are particularly important in informing the process.

Future Consultation stages

26. Throughout the next 12 months, we would envisage several opportunities for further public consultation to be carried out in addition to the statutory consultation required on the draft Local Plan when it is first published in full. Working with the Communications Team, I would anticipate a significant amount of consultation work around the choices for sites to be allocated in the Local Plan. This would be undertaken prior to any decisions being taken by the council on which might be the 'best' sites and has the chance to greatly inform the final decisions on which sites to include in the draft Plan.

27. These consultations should draw on the relationships established through the Plan-it Ashford work and the 'workshop' approach utilised with a number of parish councils in the drafting of the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD where they were asked to identify their preferred locations for development in their villages. This gave communities some 'ownership' over the decision-making process and significantly reduced the number of eventual objections to the Plan.
28. We also have a long track record of involvement and consultation as detailed proposals progress through various design workshops and events and working with local residents and other groups in order to gain as much local local consensus as possible.
29. The intention will be to work closely with the members of the Planning Task Group in identifying when public consultation would be desirable in the plan-making process and how such consultation should best be carried out.

Portfolio Holder's Views

30. Comments awaited

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Appendix 1

Plan-it Ashford Meetings held to date

Day/ Date	Organisation	event	Time	Location
3/10/12	Willesborough Community Forum	intro	7.30	Willesborough Baptist Church
16/1/13	Chilham PC	Intro & post it*	7pm	Village Hall
29/1/13	Central Ashford Community Forum	Into & post it	7pm	Furley Hall
Wed 13/2/13	Shadoxhurst PC	intro	7.30pm	Village Hall
Thurs 21/2/13	South Ashford Community Forum	Full event	-	
Wed 6/3/13	South Ashford Youth Group	Full event	4-7pm	South Ashford Baptist Church
Fri 8/3/13	Ashford District Partnership Group (Families and carers for children with disabilities)	Full event	10am-12.30pm	St Francis Church, Cryol Road
Monday 11/3/13	Rolvenden PC	intro	9.30	Civic centre
Thur 14/3	HOUSE	Full	6-10pm	Stour Centre
Fri 15/3/13	Egerton PC	intro	6 – 9pm	Millennium Village Hall
Wed 20/3/13	Mersham – Village Alliance	intro	7.30	Mountbatten Hall, Mersham
Wed 20/3/13	Newenden PC	intro	7pm	
Mon 25/3/13	Stanhope PC	intro	7pm	
Tues	Central Ashford	full	evening	St Mary's Parish Hall

Day/ Date	Organisation	event	Time	Location
26/3/13	Community Forum			
Wed 27/3/13	Ashford Access (Cllr Claughton)	Intro	10am	CR2
Wed 27/3/13	Willesborough Community Forum	full	7.30pm	Baptist Church, Hythe Rd
Sun 7/4/13	Nepalese Sagarmatha community group	full	11am	
Tuesday 9/4/13	Tenant and Residents Panel (Housing – Philippa Dale & Rebecca Wilcox)	Full	Evening 6.30pm	Council Chamber.
Tues 30/4/13	Kennington Community Forum	Intro	7pm	St Mary's Hall, Church Road Kennington
Mon 13/5/13	Boughton Aluph and Eastwell PC	Intro	7.30	Iron Room Village Hall, Boughton Aluph
Mon 20/5/13	Great Chart/Singleton PC	Intro	7pm	Parish Hall
Tuesday 28/5/13	Kennington Community Forum	Post it	7pm	St Marys Hall
Tues 11/6/13	Hastingleigh PC	Intro	7.45	Evrington Village Hall
Thurs 20/6/13	Brook PC	Intro	7pm	Brook Village Hall
Wed 10/7/13	Smeeth PC	intro	7pm	Brabourne Baptist Church

*post-it sessions are where we have asked the group to identify their main local 'likes' and 'dislikes' on post-it notes

Statement of Community Involvement First Review



Adopted December 2009

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1 Introducing the Statement of Community Involvement

Background to the SCI

- 1.1 Community involvement is an important part of preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Council is required to prepare and maintain a document known as the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out how the Council intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of Local Development Documents in their area as well as involve the public on consultation on planning applications.
- 1.2 The aim of the SCI is to ensure that all sections of the public and community, including local groups and organisations, are actively represented and involved throughout the process of preparing any Local Development Document contained within the LDF, including both Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 1.3 As a Growth Area identified in the Sustainable Communities Plan, the production of the Ashford LDF and the associated SCI is especially important. The Council's original SCI was formally adopted on the 24 August 2006 and this is the first review.

First Review of the SCI

- 1.4 This review of the adopted Ashford SCI has been undertaken in response to changes made to the Local Development Framework plan-making process following the publication of the new PPS12 ⁽¹⁾ on 4th June 2008 and to enable consistency with the accompanying amendments to the 2004 Regulations ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾. A summary of the amendments to the Regulations can be found at Appendix 4.
- 1.5 This has also given the Council an opportunity to review the original SCI following the adoption of the Core Strategy and the submission of the Council's first AAP (the Ashford Town Centre AAP) to the Secretary of State and make amendments where necessary to reflect past experiences and the most effective methods of consultation used to date.

1 Communities and Local Government (2008) 'Planning Policy Statement 12: Creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning

2 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 - 27th June 2008

3 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 - 6th April 2009

2 Explaining the Local Development Framework

- 2.1** The Local Development Framework contains a portfolio of documents called Local Development Documents (LDDs) which will collectively deliver the spatial strategy for the borough and supersede the remaining 'saved' policies in the Ashford Borough Local Plan (2000). The LDDs will include Development Plan Documents and Area Action Plans (DPDs and AAPs) that are geographically or issue specific, and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that detail core policy issues contained within the DPDs. All documents can be prepared and updated separately and are subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement. The public statement that sets out the timetable that the Council intends to follow in the production of its LDF is called the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

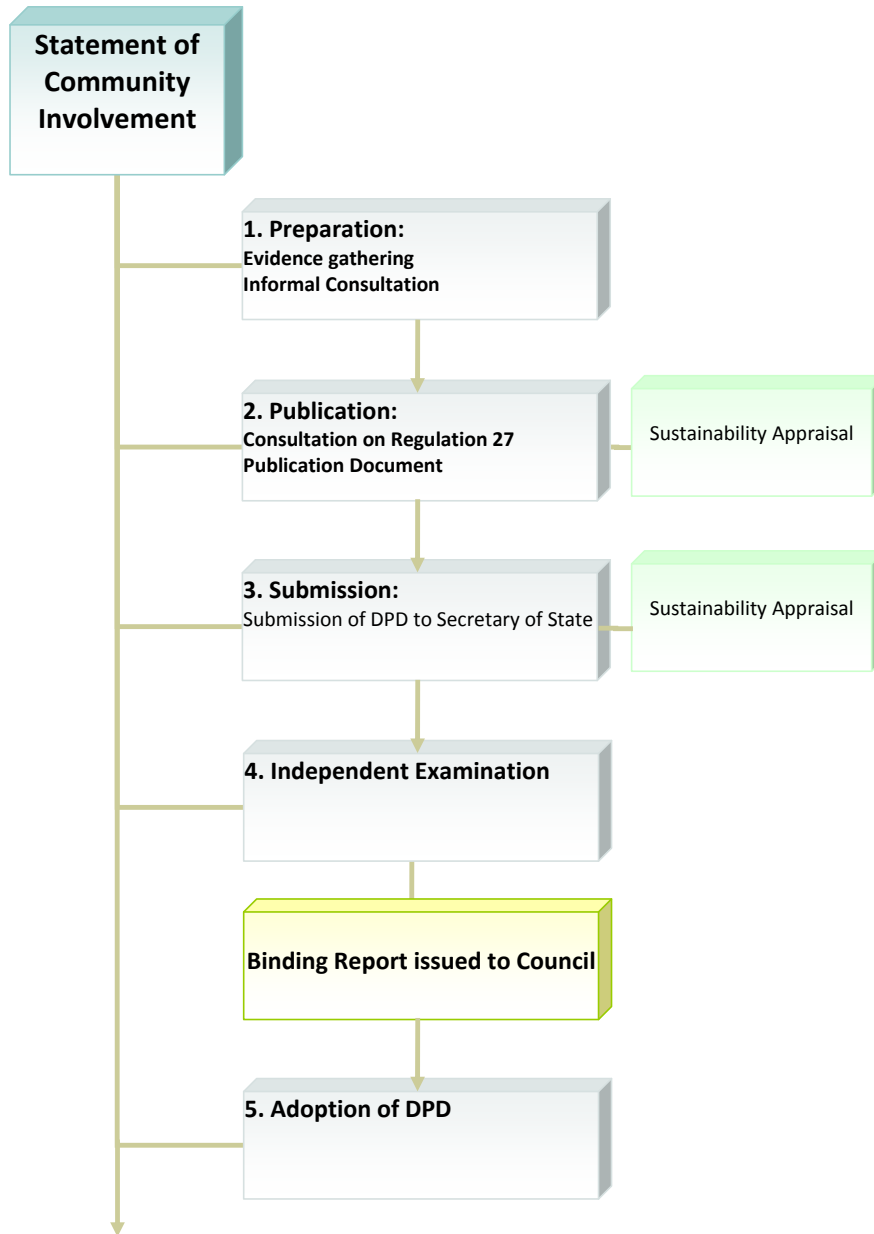
The Local Development Scheme

- 2.2** The Council is required to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Local Development Scheme is a three-year project plan for the preparation of the LDF showing the timetable for producing each Development Plan Document. It is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval and is used to assess the Council's performance in LDF preparation.
- 2.3** Ashford Borough Council's original LDS was approved in March 2005. This was first reviewed in March 2006 and the amendments published on the Council's website. A further review in 2007 was postponed following discussions with the Government Office for the South-East (GOSE) pending the outcome of the Examination into the Core Strategy. In June 2008, the Inspector's Report declared the Core Strategy 'sound' and the Council subsequently reviewed the LDS. A new LDS was agreed by the Secretary of State in October 2008.
- 2.4** The timetable for the preparation of the Ashford LDF taken from the October 2008 LDS is inserted at Appendix 1. As the timelines and content of the Local Development Framework may be subject to change, please visit our website at www.ashford.gov.uk/ldf for any updates.

Preparing the Local Development Framework Documents

- 2.5** Each Development Plan Document must be prepared in a series of stages in accordance with the new Government Regulations. See Figure 1. For a description of the changes to the 2004 Regulations please see Appendix 4.

Figure 1: The Process of preparing and adopting Development Plan Documents (DPD)



Community Involvement

- 2.6** The aim of continuous community involvement is to produce consensus as far as possible on the form and content of any Local Development Document which the Local Planning Authority are preparing. Achieving consensus is not always possible and planning is often seen as conflict laden. With Ashford's growth agenda and the potential for communities to resist change, there is a need for creativity and good will to develop solutions and reach consensus as far as possible.
- 2.7** This Statement sets out the Council's commitment to a range of participation methods to involve all relevant stakeholders and which will take place at different stages of the plan-making process. If this is successful in building a broad consensus, it may help to minimise the need for a lengthy examination process. However, it must be recognised that the Local Planning Authority will have to make difficult decisions where it may not always be possible to achieve complete consensus and it may then be necessary to take any unresolved issues to an examination.

The Sustainability Appraisal and Environmental Assessment

- 2.8** Article 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires a 'Sustainability Appraisal (SA)' to be carried out on Development Plan Documents, so that the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the plan can be appraised. In addition, Directive 2001/42/EC requires a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of certain plans and programmes, which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, both the SA and SEA will play an important role in the preparation of the LDF and ensuring they help in moving the Borough towards a more sustainable future, in line with the Borough's Community Strategy and aims for Ashford's Future.
- 2.9** The Sustainability Appraisal can incorporate the Strategic Environmental Assessment as long as guidance in 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'⁽⁴⁾ is followed. Therefore, the Council will publish a single document to accompany each Development Plan Document. This will be called the Sustainability Appraisal and will provide the basis for future monitoring, together with specific indicators and targets. For example, as part of the background documents to the Core Strategy, a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the SEA was produced and adopted in October 2006.

4 Communities and Local Government (2006) "A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive"

3 Community Involvement - The Wider Context

3.1 Continuous community involvement is not a new concept for Ashford Borough Council. Comprehensive and successful participation and consultation involving many hundreds of stakeholders and local people has been carried out for many other strategies and initiatives led by the Council in the past. Indeed much of this participation indirectly feeds into the LDF in terms of views and opinions relating to setting a vision for the Borough and ultimately development proposals and policies.

Those strategies most directly related include:-

Ashford Borough Council Corporate Plan

3.2 Ashford Borough Council's [Corporate Plan](#) 2007 to 2010 (amended 2008) aims to "To protect and improve the quality of life of every resident of the Borough, now and in the future". This plan details elected members themed priorities for the next few years and what the council, working alongside partners and others, will do to deliver these priorities.

3.3 There are seven main themes contained within the Plan which set out the aims and values which underpin the work of the Borough Council and its delivery of services to the people of Ashford.

3.4 The seven themes are:

- Good quality services giving best value for money.
- Local leadership and strong partnership working
- Customer/Citizen focus
- Our Environment
- Ashford's Future
- Housing
- Prosperity

Ashford's Community Strategy

3.5 The Ashford (Local) Strategic Partnership was set up in 2002 to reflect on the implications of Ashford's planned growth and produce a vision for the borough. It contains members from key organisations within the public, community, voluntary and private sectors, who have worked together to plan a vision for the borough. This vision is called the [Ashford Sustainable Community Strategy](#) and its aim is to transform the economic, social and environmental profile of the borough so that local people can live more happy and fulfilled lives.

3.6 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Ashford was adopted in 2008 and provides a vision statement for the Borough covering the next 10 years.

3.7 The plan sets out a number of clear strategic priorities set into eight themes, see Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Community Strategy



- 3.8** The Local Strategic Partnership has been involved in key stages of planning for the LDF and will continue to play an important role at each stage in the process. It is essential that there is a strong relationship between the Community Strategy and the LDF in order to link the objectives and identify opportunities, consider the potential to combine community consultation processes and share information gathering and monitoring processes. There is also a county-wide Community Strategy that has been endorsed by all Kent District Councils that sets out a '[Vision for Kent](#)'⁽⁵⁾. The Ashford (Local) Strategic Partnership will play an important role in providing a link between the county-wide Community Strategy, Ashford's Community Strategy and the LDF.

Beacon Award

- 3.9** The Beacon Scheme, sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government highlights best practice in local government. Beacon status is granted to those authorities who can demonstrate a clear vision, excellent service and a willingness to innovate within a theme. It is not just an award, but also a responsibility to share best practice and knowledge with other authorities. Ashford Borough Council is 1 of only 4 Council's in the country to have been awarded Beacon Status for 'promoting sustainable communities through the planning process'.
- 3.10** Ashford Borough Council received the award in 2007 as a reward for their long track record of design workshops on important sites and the community based approach to masterplanning Ashford's growth.
- 3.11** For further information please visit the Beacon Scheme website www.beacons.idea.gov.uk

5 Kent Partnership (2006) Vision for Kent, Version 2, published April 2006

Ashford's Growth Programme

- 3.12** Ashford's Growth programme is being co-ordinated and delivered by the Ashford's Future Company, which has been formed from a partnership between the local councils (KCC and ABC), government agencies and others from the public and private sector. The company is responsible for delivering regeneration throughout the Ashford Growth Area and ensuring the town develops and grows in a sustainable way. Ultimately the partnership wants Ashford to be the best place to live, work and do business.
- 3.13** The role of the partnership is to:
- Provide great urban environments
 - Improve recreation opportunities and facilities
 - Enhance and protect countryside and green spaces
 - Introduce balanced communities with good schools
 - Provide excellent community and cultural facilities
 - Improve transport and utilities infrastructure
 - Develop homes that people can afford to rent or buy
- 3.14** Ashford's Future uses the brand 'Best Placed in Britain' to promote the growth agenda. It has organised many events and workshops to help promote the Ashford brand. These have included extensive participation with the local and wider community in workshops, exhibitions, leaflets, and opinion surveys and through the media. Further participation is planned and will be carefully related wherever possible to the key formal stages of the LDF. This will provide the opportunity to create a more widely shared vision of how Ashford can develop for the benefit of the community in the future.
- 3.15** For further information regarding the activities of Ashford's Future please see www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk

4 Community Involvement in the Local Development Framework

How the council proposes to involve the public

- 4.1** This is the key part of the SCI where an inclusive programme for consulting with the public and all key stakeholders at various stages of the production of the Local Development Plan Documents is set out. Consultation on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents must conform to the SCI and include a Statement to illustrate how they have done this.
- 4.2** It is important to identify the key target groups to be involved in the LDF process. It is also important to recognise that within any area ‘communities’ are made up of many different interest groups, and effective involvement cannot happen without a good understanding of make up, needs and interests of these different groups and their capacity to engage in community involvement. For each, there will be effective ways to involve them, which, if carefully designed, will maximise their opportunities to influence the preparation of the LDF. For example, a summary leaflet might be all many people want to read about the LDF but local amenity groups may want full documents and supporting information and to debate these at workshop events. The Council has an LDF database, which is used to manage the contact details for individuals and is also arranged into, and provides an effective tool in targeting, specific target groups. The LDF database is referred to in Table 3 of the SCI.
- 4.3** It is crucial that the debate about the Local Development Framework is accessible to all. The Council will offer large print documents, a document reading service, Braille versions and a translation service for all key material it produces on request and will work with local groups on other steps needed to make sure that all members of the community can access material. Alternative versions can be made available by calling the Planning and Development Unit on 01233 330229. Events and exhibitions will be planned at venues that are fully accessible for everyone regardless of their mobility.
- 4.4** To be effective, consultation needs to be accessible and appropriate to the needs of the particular target group. A significant proportion of the Borough's residents live in rural areas, and therefore may have limited access to public transport and other services. The Council will endeavour to fully engage rural communities in consultation on the proposals that affect them as well as those communities that live in the Ashford growth area. Tailoring consultation arrangements to community needs is important and therefore innovative approaches should be explored and developed, especially in relation to “hard to reach” groups, such as the elderly, the young, disabled, ethnic minorities. These groups have tended to be underrepresented in the planning process in the past, and therefore more innovative approaches are needed in order to engage them.
- 4.5** The Ashford Community Network is a key strategic body for voluntary and community organisations within the borough. It aims to represent the sector's voice on key issues and to provide an efficient and effective single point of contact and consultation with the voluntary and community sector. The Ashford Community Network works in partnership with the Ashford (Local) Strategic Partnership.
- 4.6** Additionally, the Council is committed to the Ashford Borough Compact, which sets out clear principles and codes of practice on working positively with its voluntary and

community sector partners. Ashford Borough Council recognises that both the Ashford Community Network and the Compact are key to enabling effective involvement of marginalised groups in policy development and community planning. The [Ashford Borough Compact](#) can be viewed on the Ashford Borough Council website.

4.7 One of the main aims of the SCI is to ensure that all sections, including the public, local voluntary and community groups and organisations, service providers, landowners and developers, Parish Councils are actively involved throughout the process of preparing any local development documents including Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. Planning Policy Statement 12 lists a set of ‘statutory’ consultees that must be involved in consultation - this is reproduced in Appendix 2. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to comment during a formal consultation period. The Council is happy to accept representations in the following formats: online via the Consultation Portal, by representation form, by letter, by email and by fax. Hard copy representation forms are available at deposit points and by telephoning 01233 330229.

4.8 The following table sets out broad consultee groups that the Council will aim to involve and the techniques that may be used to engage them.

Table 1 List of Consultee groups and techniques used to target these groups

Consultee Group	Example	Consultation techniques proposed for targeting group
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashford Borough Councillors Kent County Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDF Task Group and formal Council meetings Workshops and meetings
Parish Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Parish Council chairman and clerks Representatives from Parish Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Forums Community Workshops and meetings Parish Council meetings
Business Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Companies - Rural and Urban Ashford Chamber of Commerce, Ashford Town Centre Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop, meetings and focus groups Business breakfasts Briefings Participation in exhibitions
Land Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers, landowners, house builders and consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings and workshops Housing Market Partnership Business breakfasts
Partner Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashford’s Future Company Board Members, Government Agencies, Local Strategic Partnership, Statutory consultees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops and meetings Consult with partner agencies throughout the drafting of policy documents

Consultee Group	Example	Consultation techniques proposed for targeting group
General Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Borough and the wider area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in workshops and exhibitions Focus groups on specific issues
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Borough and the wider area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep up to date on issues via the Council website and the media and press Exhibitions and public events
Hard to Reach groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people, older people, ethnic minority groups, disabled people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific tailored events within schools, colleges, community centres etc Workshops, exhibitions and focus groups

The detailed participation proposals

- 4.9** The participation processes and activities proposed can be separated into two parts: the types of consultation we intend to carry out throughout the process and the broad interest groups that we intend to involve at each stage.
- 4.10** Individual Development Plan Documents will vary greatly in content, scope and location, it is important to consider the most appropriate consultation method to use at the different stages in the preparation of each DPD, and also to ensure that the methods employed are suitable for the intended audience. A consultation statement of how the methods used for each DPD conform to the general thrust and approach set out in the SCI will also be included, and will form part of the Submission to the Secretary of State, in addition to informing the monitoring and review process.
- 4.11** The following table (Table 2) sets out the general consultation techniques that we may use throughout the production of the Local Development Documents and what these techniques involve. Please note, this list is not exhaustive and additional consultation techniques could be utilised where they are felt necessary or could improve public participation during consultation events, for example working with the local Parish Council or using leaflets advertising a consultation event. Following on from this, Table 3 sets out the key stages in the production of a DPD and the types of consultation that may be carried out at each stage, some form part of the minimum statutory requirements for consultation. The Council exceeds the minimum statutory requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, (as amended 2008 and 2009).

Table 2 Consultation Methods for Development Plan Documents

Consultation Techniques	Examples where we have utilised consultation Techniques
<p>Consultation document</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft documents made available for inspection at the Council Offices, Libraries and other appropriate venues and on the Council website. See Appendix 3 for a list of 'Deposit Points' where hard-copy documents will be available for consultation. • Formal opportunities for making representations on the draft documents in accordance with Government requirements at formal plan making stages. 	<p>Issues and Options documents have been prepared for consultation for several DPDs to date. These are published on the Council's website and comment made either in hard copy or via the Council's consultation portal on the website.</p> <p>Hard copies of DPDs and referenced background documents are available on request</p>
<p>Staffed exhibitions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition outlining main issues and proposals with chance for face-to-face discussion with planning officers. • Summary exhibition outlining main issues and proposals using a range of materials that capture interest and reaction. • Acting as an effective way of soliciting responses to published documents • Exhibitions will take place at times and be located at venues accessible to the widest possible audience. 	<p>Staffed exhibitions in conjunction with Ashford's Future have been held in the County Square Shopping centre to help highlight the issues and options for the Town Centre AAP.</p>
<p>Consultation Portal and website</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide basic information on the LDF process, timetable, outputs and all documents produced in a downloadable 	<p>To date the Council has successfully consulted on the following documents using the Consultation Portal:</p>

<p>format conforming with e-government initiatives and accessible to all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To act as a consultation tool at the formal consultation stages, through viewing documents and submitting representations electronically: www.ashford.gov.uk/consult and www.ashford.gov.uk/ldf 	<p>Ashford Town Centre AAP - Publication Version Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD Regulation 27 - Publication version Cheeseman's Green and Waterbrook AAP - Issues and Options Report Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD - Issues and Options Report Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD - Issues and Options Report Draft Affordable Housing SPD Draft Sustainable Design and Construction SPD</p> <p>This software is hosted externally by Limehouse Software and provides the consultee with a user friendly environment to make representations and read comments that have been received.</p>
<p>Development Update (containing the LDF Newsletter)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informative six-monthly newsletter produced to highlight progress in the production of LDF documents and on major planning applications, and to provide information on proposed public consultation events, and where to obtain feedback from past consultations. The newsletter will be available to download from the Council's website and interested parties, including Parish Councils will be informed of its availability via email. 	<p>The LDF newsletter is contained within the Development Update. It is produced every six months and is available to download from the website in PDF format. Development Update.</p>
<p>Workshops/Meetings</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised meetings / discussions to discuss specific issues in a structured forum and to obtain initial concepts and develop ideas. Generating structured discussions to establish consensus and to flag up areas of contention. 	<p>The Council has successfully organised two series of village workshops, to gain views and perspectives on the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD. These workshops were held in different villages identified for development, with invitations from the respective Parish Councils to gain a broad cross-section of the community.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide developers / landowners with the opportunity to promote their sites and set out their aspirations. • Increasing interface and working relations between consultants, agents, the council and key stakeholders, in order for key people to feed successfully into LDF process. 	<p>Regular stakeholder and landowner meetings are held regarding the proposed Ashford Urban extensions and a workshop on the Chilmington Green urban extension was held in February 2009.</p>
<p>Formal Adverts</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are statutory notices placed in local newspapers to advertise key public consultation stages in the production of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents showing the places and times at which the proposals documents can be inspected. 	<p>To date all statutory adverts have been placed in the Ashford and Tenterden editions of the Kentish Express newspaper, when required.</p>
<p>Informal Adverts</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May also include articles / adverts in the local newspaper highlighting the specific parts of the DPD preparation process, consultation events or specific requests for information. 	<p>The Council successfully used this technique for the Affordable Housing SPD, where the Council had a front page article explaining the document and the consultation process.</p> <p>The Council also informally advertised in July 2007 to invite local landowners / developers to put forward their land for consideration for development in the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD.</p>

Table 3 Stages and Types of Consultation

Stage	Type of Consultation
Preparation: -Evidence gathering -Informal Consultation	
Informal Adverts	Used to alert people to early work on area-based elements of LDDs and seek, for example, site submissions from interested parties.
Informal Workshops / meetings	Statutory consultees will be consulted on the evolving issues, as necessary. The Council will hold informal meetings with the appropriate specific consultation bodies and non-statutory consultation bodies, to discuss issues at the earliest opportunity as well a interested stakeholders.
Exhibitions	May be used in local communities to identify potential issues or proposals at early stage of DPD making process, or to address a mass passing audience and engender interest and debate on the issues the DPD needs to address.
Development Update (containing the LDF Newsletter)	Raising awareness of general issues and work underway.
Scoping Document	Informal scoping report sent to all 'specific' consultation bodies that are affected by the issues and policies of the Development Plan Document. Also an email notification sent to all consultees on database and to 'general' consultation bodies as the Council considers appropriate.
Issues and Options Report	Consultation document prepared to set out what the Council considers to be the principal issues that the DPD needs to address and various but not exclusive options as to how that might be done. Minimum of 6 week consultation period. Specific notification given to relevant stakeholders but consultation open to general public.
Website	LDF web pages will be kept up-to-date and show detail relating to active policy documents being prepared, the broad timings for

	consultation events proposed including how people can get involved in the process.
Publication: Consultation on Regulation 27 Publication Document	
Full Document	Full consultation document available for inspection at the deposit points outlined in Appendix 3 and to download from the Consultation Portal. An electronic copy will be sent to all 'specific' consultation bodies outlined in Appendix 2. In addition, Parish Councils' will receive a hard copy of the document.
Online Consultation Portal and website	<p>Consultees are encouraged to consult online and register as a consultee through the Ashford Borough Council Consultation Portal</p> <p>Full consultation document downloadable from Consultation Portal website and any background documents including promotional material will be downloadable from website where possible. Clear instructions on consultation timings and how to participate in the consultation will be displayed on website in addition to the consultation being highlighted on the planning 'News and events' page.</p>
Letter / email notification from the Consultation Portal	An email notification will be sent to anyone registered on the Consultation Portal website. Anyone, who wishes to receive notification, but does not have email will be added to the Consultation Database and sent a letter.
Formal Adverts	Public notice in the local newspaper of the proposal matters and the places and times that the pre-submission documents can be inspected.
Submission of DPD to Secretary of State	
Website	Website updated to inform people that the document has been submitted to the Secretary of State and Programme Officer details displayed.
Formal Advert	As required by Regulations - Public notice in the local newspaper stated that the document

	has been submitted and Programme Officer details displayed.
Full Document	As required by Regulation 30 a copy of the Submission version of the document will be made available for inspection at the deposit points outlined in Appendix 3 and notification will be sent to all 'General' consultees listed in Appendix 2 informing them of its availability. An electronic copy version of the document will be sent to all 'Specific' consultees outlined in Appendix 2.
Independent Examination	
Consultation Document	Copies of Council evidence provided to those appearing, otherwise on demand – and at cost for commercial organisations.
Website	Information on examination arrangements. Representations made on submitted document displayed.
Formal Advert	As required by Regulations

Consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents

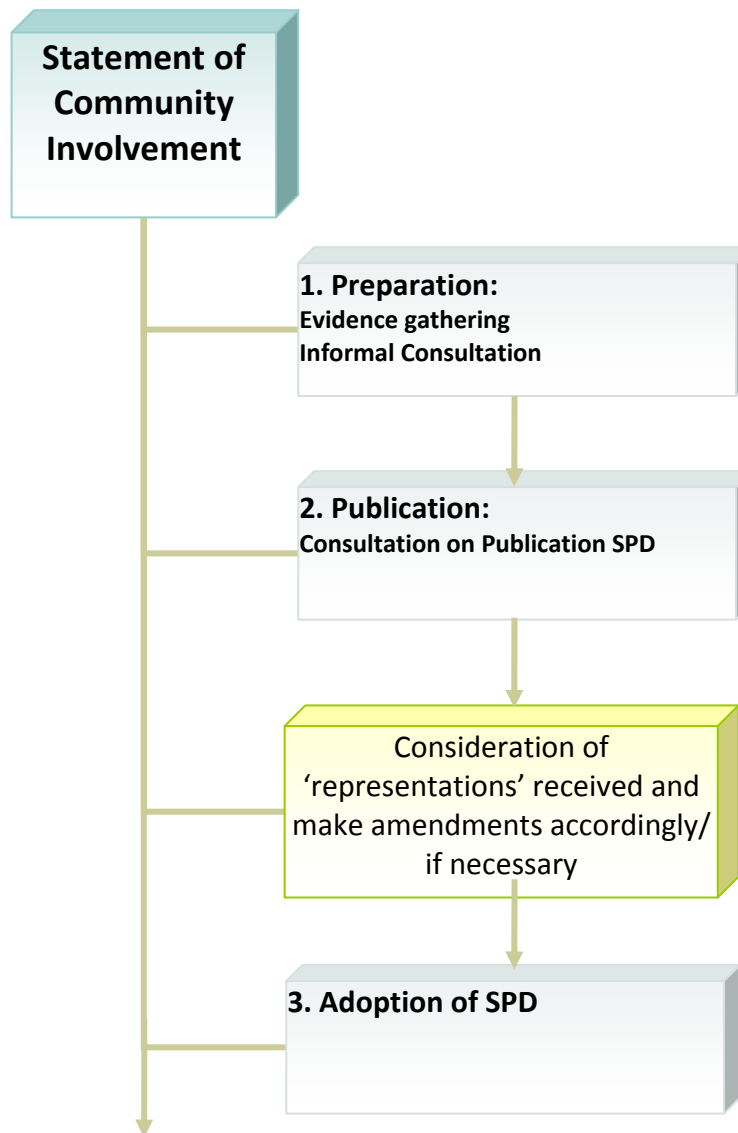
- 4.12** Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) will form part of the policy framework for the Borough. Their purpose is to expand on policy issues or provide further detail to policies in development plan documents. All proposed Supplementary Planning Documents are timetabled into the current Local Development Scheme although it is now no longer a requirement for the LDS to include the timetable for the preparation of these documents.
- 4.13** The process for the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document is much simpler than that for the preparation of a Development Plan Document. Although SPD is not subject to independent Examination by a Planning Inspector, it is nevertheless important for SPD to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement. Consultation techniques will vary and be targeted to particular groups and individuals depending on the nature, issues or geographical extent of the proposed Supplementary Planning Document. An individual programme for consultation should be produced for each Supplementary Planning Document. The programme should inform the local community and stakeholder to the proposed consultation processes for that specific SPD at an early stage in its preparation.
- 4.14** The minimum statutory requirements for consulting on SPDs are outlined in the following table and Figure 3 outlines the process for preparing and adopting SPDs.

Table 4 Consultation requirements for a Supplementary Planning Document

Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Process	
4	<p>Informal consultation targeted at interested parties and individuals and with representative organisations, to identify relevant issues and options prior to the start of the formal consultation process</p>
	<p>Before the adoption of a Supplementary Planning Document, a four to six week public consultation period must be arranged on the draft SPD with the following minimum standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make copies of the SPD documents, and a statement of SPD matters available for inspection during normal office hours at principal offices (Civic Centre, Ashford) and at such other places that the authority considers appropriate. • Publish the draft SPD documents on the Council's consultation Portal. • Send a copy of the draft SPD document, the sustainability appraisal report (where applicable), a consultation statement, and relevant supporting documents to each of the 'specific' consultation bodies in the Regulations to the extent that the Council thinks that the SPD affects the body. • Also send a copy of the draft SPD to any 'general' consultation bodies, as the Council considers appropriate. • Advertise the draft SPD in the local newspaper and state where the documents are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected. • The Council must also consult the Regional Planning Body to ensure conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

- 4.15** Village Design Statements are managed and organised by the local community and are a tool that local communities can use to influence the design of new development locally by identifying, describing and analysing local character and drawing guidance directly from this character. Under the Borough Local Plan, Village / Parish Design Statements may have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), whereas under the new Local Development Framework, Village / Parish Design Statements may be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). The Council is keen to continue to adopt Village / Parish Design Statements as supplementary guidance and will assist local communities by providing advice on consultation when drafting and adopting their Village / Parish Design Statements.

The process of preparing and adopting Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)



Reporting back

- 4.16 An important part of community involvement is to report back to those who have taken the trouble to be involved in consultation, and to let them know how their comments and suggestions have been taken on board.
- 4.17 The results from formal consultation and key decisions relating to the LDF process will be dealt with in a number of ways. Initial consultation feedback will be reported to the LDF Task Group, who will make formal recommendations to be considered by the Council’s Executive. The Executive’s decisions will, in turn, need to be ratified by the Full Council when LDF documents are either to be formally submitted for examination or be adopted as Council policy.

- 4.18** The Council's formal response to representations and those that may result in any additional changes or modifications to Development Plan Documents will be published on the website. Stakeholders will be notified of the consultation feedback through the LDF Update Newsletter.

Consultation on Sustainability Appraisals

- 4.19** A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will be produced for each Development Plan Document as a supporting document and will be published for comments and representations as part of the formal consultation on the Regulation 27 Publication version of the DPD. All specific consultee bodies (Appendix 2) will be sent electronic copies of the SA alongside the main DPD document.
- 4.20** Where appropriate, an initial SA may also be published alongside an Issues and Options report when consultation takes place.
- 4.21** Finally, where appropriate a Sustainability Appraisal will be available to download from the Consultation Portal and to view in hard-copy at the designated deposit points. Hard copy versions will be available to purchase on request by telephoning 01233 330229.

5 Active participation on planning applications

5.1 This section sets out how the Council makes information on planning applications available to the public and how comments can be made. The Council has a number of procedures currently in place to involve the public in considering planning applications. These are in accordance with National Policy: Circular 22/80 - Development Control and Practice; Circular 28/83 – Information on Planning Applications and Circular 15/92 – Publicity for Planning Applications. These documents are available via the Planning Portal (www.planningportal.gov.uk).

Definition of Major, Minor and Other applications

5.2 Major

- Applications for 10 residential units or more
- Residential sites of 0.5 ha or more
- The creation of 1000m² or more of non-residential floorspace
- All sites of more than 1 ha in size

5.3 Minor

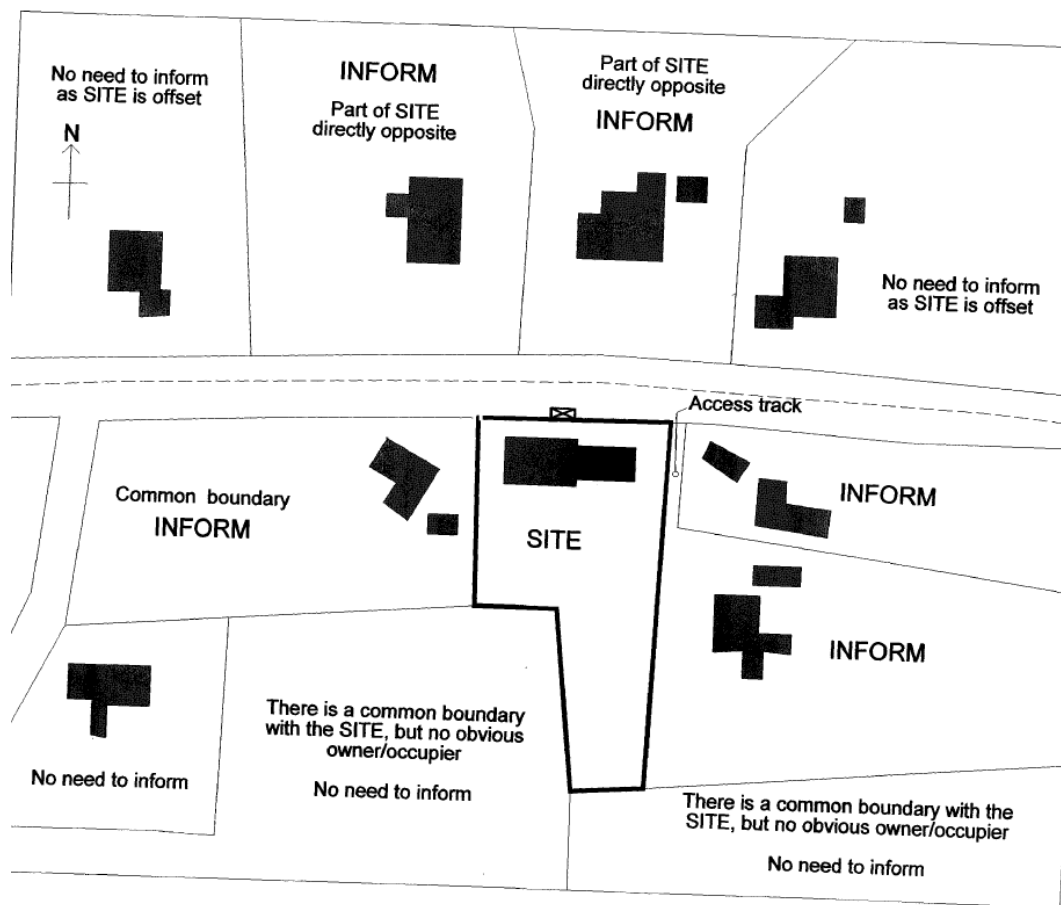
- Development that does not meet the criteria for major development and is not a change of use or householder development

5.4 Other

- Changes of Use, householder, advertisement and other related applications such as Certificates of Lawfulness

5.5 When notifying neighbouring residents and businesses, it is the Council's normal practice to send letters to individual premises. Letters are sent to immediate neighbours in accordance with the plan below.

Figure 4: Notifying Neighbours



- 5.6 For larger proposals letters are distributed more widely, depending upon the scale of the proposal. Notification letters invite responses to be made within 24 days of the date of the letter. The results of any such notification will be carefully considered and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council. Bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a different period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.
- 5.7 Anybody may comment on an application even if they have not been notified by the council.
- 5.8 Ashford Borough Council undertakes statutory publicity in accordance with current legislation. Government is likely to change the statutory publicity requirements and our future approach will reflect any changes that are made. Currently for submitted major planning applications we post Planning Notices on or adjoining planning application sites. Where a proposal may have impact on more than one street it may be appropriate to display more than one site notice. Some applications are also advertised in the local newspaper, if the application affects a listed building, a conservation area, affects a public right of way, or departs from the Council's Local Plan, or if the application may have a substantial impact on an area.
- 5.9 Notification letters or emails will also be sent to organisations (e.g. Highways Agency, Environment Agency) etc. and the organisations invited to comment on proposals in

accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

- 5.10** Borough Councilors will be notified of applications in their Ward. Notification of each application will be sent to the relevant Parish Council and responses invited within 24 days of the date of the notification letter. Such notification and response will ideally be carried out electronically and the Council will keep under review the current practice of providing paper copies.
- 5.11** The Council will make electronic copies of all live applications and accompanying plans available for inspection, in the Council offices at the Civic Centre. Paper copies will be available on request at the Civic Centre. In addition, electronic copies of all applications will be available for inspection at the Ashford 'Gateway'. If the application lies within Tenterden or the parishes of Woodchurch, High Halden, Biddenden, Rolvenden, Newenden, Wittersham or Stone, electronic copies of all live applications and accompanying plans will be available for inspection at the 'Gateway' office in High Street, Tenterden. In addition, a hard copy of any live application within Tenterden and the above parishes may be requested to be available for inspection at the Tenterden 'Gateway' office within 7 days of the request being made to the Council. This additional service at the 'Gateway' will be provided until improvements to facilities for viewing are introduced there, such as the provision of larger screens.
- 5.12** All copies of applications and plans are available for inspection on the Internet, usually within 4 working days of being registered. Weekly lists of applications, decisions and appeals are available via the Council's website.
- 5.13** The Council receives and handles comments on planning applications by conventional post, fax and email or by our online comments form on the council website. The Council's website provides access for members of the public to view the full details of planning applications, including their accompanying plans. The website is updated with any subsequent correspondence received from the applicant or third party allowing the public to track the progress of an application.
- 5.14** If there are any significant amendments to the planning application during consideration, the relevant Parish Council will be notified. The period for commenting on amended plans will normally be 24 calendar days but this may be reduced to no less than 10 calendar days if circumstances such as the date of a planning committee dictate.
- 5.15** In addition to consulting the Parish Council, notification will be sent to the relevant ward member, nearby residents and to people who have already written in with comments. The period for commenting on amended plans will normally be 24 calendar days but this may be reduced to no less than 10 calendar days if circumstances such as the date of a planning committee dictate.
- 5.16** Where a s106 agreement would result in responsibilities or liabilities being placed on a Parish Council, the agreement of that Council will need to be sought to the Heads of Terms for the agreement relating to those matters only prior to consideration by the Planning Committee, and they will need to be a party to the agreement.

- 5.17** The Council's Planning Committee takes place approximately every 4 weeks and is attended by elected Members who determine the decision of major, complex or controversial planning applications. The Committee agendas' are available on the Council's website, and include reports on the individual planning applications being considered. Written comments on planning applications may be considered by the Committee if received by 15.00 hours on the day of the committee meeting.
- 5.18** All Parish Councils will be notified of the publication of each planning committee agenda on the council's web site. This will be an email alert, normally sent a week before the meeting, to the parish clerk.
- 5.19** The Parish Council and one speaker in support and one in objection to the application are allowed to speak at the meeting for up to 3 minutes each prior to the application being debated. Committee reports and resulting decisions can be viewed via the Council's website. Requests to speak must be made in writing, which includes emails, and must be received by 3pm on two working days before the committee meeting. Usually this is 3pm on the Monday preceding the Wednesday meeting unless Monday is a public holiday when the cut-off time will be 3pm on the preceding Friday.
- 5.20** At the time a decision is issued on any application, the Council will notify all those who have submitted written comments on the application either by letter or email. We will say if the application has been approved or refused. Parish Councils will be notified too and provided with an electronic link to a copy of the decision notice. If a decision is made that is contrary to the views of the Parish Council, the Parish Council will be informed in writing.
- 5.21** Copies of all decisions will be made available on the council's website and electronically at all council offices. Weekly lists of decisions will also be available via the Internet.
- 5.22** If the council receives an appeal following its decision on an application we will notify all those who commented on the original application either by letter or email. We will explain what the appeal is about, how people can be involved in the appeal process and the timescales for being involved. If the appeal is about a householder application, that is typically those for extensions or alteration to houses, then we will only let people know the appeal has been received. New comments on these types of appeal cannot be made at this stage.

Pre-application consultation

- 5.23** Ashford Borough Council and Ashford's Future Partnership, the local delivery vehicle for Ashford's growth area, face a major challenge to fulfil the Sustainable Communities agenda. The Borough Council and Ashford's Future has developed a standards 'Charter' for strategic and major development proposals. The Charter, which has the commitment of all the local agencies involved in the development process, sets in place a structured toolkit whose aim to encourage and facilitate major planning applications from submission to determination. Ashford's Future core delivery team will be available to negotiate where competing interests threaten to frustrate progress. More information can be found on the Strategic Sites web page:

www.ashford.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/strategic_development.aspx

- 5.24** The Council also works hard to inform and involve the wider community in helping to create better quality developments and “place making”. The Council encourages potential major developers to undertake pre-application consultation with the local community on significant applications. This process can serve to inform interested parties about the nature and scale of the proposal and local people have an opportunity to comment before proposals reach an advanced stage.
- 5.25** There are many pre-application consultation techniques currently being used by the Council, not all these methods will be suitable for each pre-application consultation, it is essential to match the consultation methods with the individual planning proposal. The Council uses a combination of the following.
- Public meetings and exhibitions
 - Workshops
 - Surgeries
 - Enquiry by Design
 - Development briefs
- 5.26** The Council produces a major sites development update leaflet every six months to inform key stakeholders and consultees about significant planning applications and progress being made with them. The development update will be distributed to the Borough’s principal libraries and will be circulated to interested consultees as well as being published on the Council’s website.

6 Resources and Management of the process

6

- 6.1** Public consultation events that require considerable staff involvement, such as staffed exhibitions and workshops will be prioritised to be held at the most effective stages in the preparation of Development Plan Documents. These types of public consultation can be resource intensive both in terms of Officers time and production costs but are very valuable and effective consultation techniques. Assistance and support from other staff within the Council or partner organisations and agencies may be required as well as from Ashford's Future Company and the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 6.2** A non-prescriptive approach will be taken to wider community involvement, so that the Council can tailor events to be relevant to the subject matter. For example, an exhibition in a town centre shopping centre on a weekend if the subject matter is regarding the Town centre, or a community workshop held in a village hall in the evening if the subject matter is regarding rural issues. This approach has been effective so far in engaging the communities who will be most affected by the proposals and allowing them to express themselves fully and influence the preparation of the document in question.
- 6.3** Wherever possible, the Planning and Development Unit will aim to undertake consultation in tandem with other initiative and strategies in order to make better use of resources and to avoid 'consultation overload'. When considering spatial elements contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy we will consult with the Local Strategic Partnership. We will also build participation by drawing on the skills and resources of the existing Urban and Parish Forums, local interest and amenity and stakeholder groups, and the Ashford Community Network wherever it is considered appropriate.
- 6.4** The key target groups and consultation techniques set out in this SCI to inform and involve the community on LDF documents will be monitored for their effectiveness by use of feedback forms and the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is published in December each year and available at the designated Deposit Points (see Appendix 3) and to download from the Council's website. Listed below are the community involvement indicators that are used in the AMR assessment. These indicators may be developed or changed to meet new circumstances in the future.
- Number of staffed exhibitions and workshops taken place and attendees
 - Number of individuals invited to events
 - Analysis of events tailored to 'hard to reach' groups
 - Number of representations received
 - Number of representations made (by consultee groups)

Appendix 1 - Timetable taken from the Local Development Scheme

Local Development Scheme Timetable

Timetable for the Preparation of the Ashford Local Development Framework – 2008 – 2011

Key: C = Consultation on scope of SA, P = Publication of submission DPD for consultation or Publication of draft SPD for consultation (as appropriate), S = Submission of DPD to Secretary of State, A = Adoption, 1 = Pre Hearing Meeting, 2 = Hearing Sessions Open, 3 = Inspector Report Fact Check, 4 = Inspector Report Final.

LDF Document	2008												2009												2010												2011											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Core Strategy						A																																										
Ashford Town Centre AAP															P																																	
Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD																																																
Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD																																																
Chilington Green / Discovery Park AAP																																																
Cheesmans Green / Waterbrook AAP																																																
Generic DC policy DPD																																																

Supplementary Planning Documents	2008												2009												2010												2011											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Affordable Housing SPD								P																																								
Sustainable Design & Construction SPD																																																
Infrastructure Contributions SPD																																																
Residential Space & Layout SPD																																																
Green Spaces & Water Environment SPD																																																
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems																																																
Broadband & Telecommunications SPD																																																

Appendix 2 - List of participants

The Town and County (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended 2008 and 2009), lists three different classifications of consultation bodies; specific, general, and other consultees.

'Specific' consultation bodies **must be** consulted on in accordance with the regulations. 'General' and 'Other' consultation bodies should be consulted upon where appropriate. (Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations have occurred)

Specific Consultation Bodies

Regulations	Consultee for Ashford
The regional planning body if the local planning authority's area is in a region other than London	Government Office for the South East South East England Partnership Board
A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority	Maidstone Borough Council Shepway District Council Swale Borough Council Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Rother District Council Canterbury City Council Kent County Council East Sussex County Council All Parish Councils in the Ashford Borough Kent County Constabulary
The Coal Authority	The Coal Authority
Natural England	Natural England
The Environment Agency	The Environment Agency
The Secretary of State for Transport - in relation to functions concerning railways by virtue of section 1 of the Railways Act 2005 (in cases where the plan affects rail provision projects, national rail projects, such as High Speed 2 or Crossrail, and/or the local Network Rail office) and the Secretary of State's function as highway authority by virtue of section 1 of the Highways Act 1980 (the Highways Agency)	Highways Agency Network Rail Channel Tunnel Rail link
English Heritage	English Heritage South East Region
A Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority	South East England Development Agency

Regulations	Consultee for Ashford
<p>Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3) (a) of the Communications Act 2003, and</p> <p>Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority</p>	<p>Mobile Operators Association (MOA) 3 O2 Orange T-mobile (UK) Limited Vodafone</p>
<p>Any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary care trust • person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986 • sewage undertaker • water undertaker. 	<p>Eastern and Kent Primary Care Trust South East Coast Strategic Health Authority Scotia Gas Networks (Southern Gas Networks Plc) South East Water Ltd Southern Water</p>
<p>The Homes and Communities agency - under transitional provisions, this will be a requirement from 6th April 2010</p>	<p>The Homes and Communities Agency</p>

General Consultation Bodies

The general consultation bodies are also listed in the regulations. The regulations identify five types of bodies as general consultation bodies that relate to voluntary organisations representing certain groups within the community. The general consultation bodies are:

- i) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the council's area
- ii) bodies which represent the interests of:
 - different ethnic or national groups in the council's area
 - different religious groups in the council's area

- disabled people in the council's area
- people carrying on business in the council's area.

The following list contains a selection of 'general' consultation bodies and is for information only and should provide an indication of the types of participants who may be consulted on in the preparation of policy documents.

- Ashford Access
- Ashford Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Ashford Committee of the Kent Association of Parish Councils
- Ashford Community Network
- Ashford and District Volunteer Centre
- Ashford Fire Brigade
- Ashford's Future
- Ashford International Chinese Association
- Ashford Landowners Group
- Ashford Museum
- Ashford Muslim Association
- Ashford Rural Trust
- Ashford Town Centre Partnership
- Business Link Kent
- Central Ashford Community Forum
- Churches Together in Ashford
- Community Action South East Kent
- County Square Shopping Centre
- English Partnerships
- Gaxmudian Kurdish Community
- Halcrow Consulting Limited
- High Weald AONB
- The Housing Corporation
- Kent Association of the Disabled People (Ashford Branch)
- Kent Downs AONB
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Kent Police
- McArthur Glen Designer Outlet
- Mid & SE Kent Council for Voluntary Services
- The National Trust
- Parish Councils
- Royal Mail
- Sagarmatha Gurkha Community
- Salvation Army Housing Association
- South Kent College
- Stagecoach East Kent Limited
- Surestart (Ashford)
- William Harvey Hospital
- Zimbabwean Youth Group (Awake Grace Ministeries)

Other Consultation bodies

The Council should carry out public participation that is appropriate for the development plan document being produced. Depending on the plan being produced, it may be appropriate to consult with other agencies and organisations in addition to those identified as specific or general consultation bodies. The following list provides some suggestions, but it is not exhaustive, and we may not always consult with these bodies.

- British Geological Survey
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Church Commissioners
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
- Crown Estate Office
- Diocesan board of finance
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Environmental groups at the national, regional and local level, such as the Campaign to Protect Rural England and Kent Wildlife Trust.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Home Builders Federation
- Learning and Skills Council
- National Playing Fields Association
- Post Office property holdings
- Sport England
- Traveller Law Reform Project

Appendix 3 - Deposit Points

Local Development Framework documents and any associated background documents and representation forms will be made available to view in hard-copy at the following deposit points:

Ashford Borough Council Civic Centre
Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL
9am - 5pm (Monday to Thursday); 9am - 4.30pm (Friday)

Ashford Library
Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1QX
9am - 6pm (Monday to Wednesday); 9.30am - 8pm (Thursday); 9am - 6pm (Friday); 9am - 5pm (Saturday)

Charing Library
Market Place, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LR
Closed (Monday and Wednesday); 9am - 5pm (Tuesday); 9am - 12 noon (Thursday); 2pm - 5pm (Friday); 10am - 2pm (Saturday)

Tenterden Gateway
2 Manor Row, Tenterden, TN30 6HP
Open 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 4pm on Saturdays.

Wye Library
6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5AF
Closed (Monday and Wednesday); 9am - 12 noon (Tuesday); 2pm - 6pm (Thursday); 9am - 5pm (Friday); 10am - 2pm (Saturday)

Alternatively you can purchase a hard copy of the document by calling 01233 330229, by emailing asfordldf@ashford.gov.uk or by writing to:

Strategic Planning Unit
Ashford Borough Council,
Tannery Lane,
Ashford, TN23 1PL

Copies of the document can be downloaded from the Ashford Borough Council Consultation Portal www.ashford.gov.uk/consult

Appendix 4 - Amendments to the 2004 Regulations

The main amendments to the LDF Regulations 2004 were made during 2008 with further amendments made during 2009. The main reasons for these changes have been explained in the the prepared Explanatory Notes on the Office for Public Sector Information website www.opsi.gov.uk⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾ and further information can be found in the Plan Making Manual, available on the Planning Advisory Services website (<http://www.pas.gov.uk>).

The main changes taken from the 2008 Amendments relevant to the SCI are highlighted below:

Development Plan Document (DPD) Preparation:

The revised Regulations remove the requirement for the formal 'Preferred Options' consultation stage (the former Regulation 26 stage). Instead, the new Regulation 25 introduces a single preparatory stage for DPDs, which includes: Scoping and evidence gathering, consideration of issues and options and consideration of draft DPD proposals and policies (See Figure 1).

The minimum consultation requirements of Regulation 25 are:

- The Council must notify each of the 'specific consultation bodies' and 'general consultation bodies' that may have an interest in the subject of the DPD, as set out in Appendix 2.
- The Council must invite these bodies to make representations on what the DPD could contain.
- The Council will consider if it is appropriate to invite representations from general consultees and carryout consultation accordingly.

The Council will try and go beyond these minimum requirements wherever it is felt necessary.

Publication of the proposed submission DPD:

Following preparation of the DPD under the new Regulation 25, new Regulation 27 requires that the Council publishes a 'Regulation 27 Publication Version' (sometimes known as Draft Submission version) of the DPD for consultation, before it formally submits the DPD to the Secretary of State for examination.

The new Regulation 28 requires the Council to invite representations on the Regulation 27 Publication version for a minimum 6 week consultation period (See Table 3 for formal consultation arrangements).

Submission of the DPD for examination:

The Council will consider all of the representations made on the Regulation 27 Publication version of the DPD. In response, the Council may propose changes to the DPD. If these changes are minor in nature, the Council will then prepare an addendum to the Regulation 27 Publication version of the DPD setting out the proposed changes. If any of the proposed changes to the DPD are regarded as significant, then a further 6 week consultation will be carried out on those

6 Explanatory Memorandum to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 No.1371, available from www.opsi.gov.uk

7 Explanatory Memorandum to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 No.401, available from www.opsi.gov.uk

parts of the DPD which are affected (not the whole DPD). When no further significant amendments are to be proposed by the Council, it will then formally submit the DPD (with any addendum of minor changes) to the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

Independent Examination:

An examination of the DPD will be carried out by an independent Planning Inspector to test its soundness, taking into account the representations that have been received. Those who have made representations may be invited by the Inspector to attend the parts of the examination held in public.

The Inspector will prepare a report for the Council setting out their conclusions on the issues that have been discussed at the examination and declaring whether the DPD is 'sound' or not. If the DPD is considered 'sound', the Inspector may still make recommendations that the DPD be amended. These recommendations are binding on the Council and the Council may not formally adopt the DPD without accepting those amendments.

There have been no changes to the Regulations regarding the issuing of a Binding Report and Adoption by the Council.

The New Regulation 26 sets out how the Public should participate in the preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement

The 2009 amendments are minimal and offer further clarification of Regulation 26 regarding preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement.

Changes to the Regulations regarding Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

There is no longer a statutory requirement to carry out a Sustainable Appraisal for each SPD.

Appendix 5 - Glossary

AAP Area Action Plans - A type of Development Plan Document focused upon a specific location or an area subject to conservation or significant change (such as major regeneration). AAPs proposed for Ashford Borough include the Town centre AAP and an AAP for the proposed urban extensions.

AMR Annual Monitoring Report - Part of the local development framework, the annual monitoring report will assess the implementation of the local development scheme and to the extent which policies in local development documents are being successfully implemented.

Community Strategy- A document setting out a vision for the Ashford Borough community, produced by the Local Strategic Partnership, which contains members from key organisations within the public, community, voluntary and private sectors.

DPD Development Plan Document - A key local planning document forming an essential part of the Local Development Framework. DPDs include the Core Strategy, site specific allocations of land, Area Action Plans (where needed), and the Proposals Map. DPDs form part of the statutory development plan. All DPDs are subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination. Once adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

LDD Local Development Documents - The collective term for documents forming part of the Local Development Framework, which include Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

LDF Local Development Frameworks - The name of the portfolio which contains all the policies and documents that collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the Borough.

LDS Local Development Scheme - The document which sets out the timetable for the production of the Local Development Framework.

Parish Plan- A Government-sponsored initiative aimed at improving rural communities, where a plan is developed by the local community setting out what the community and Parish Council should work on in the next few years. Several parishes in Ashford have produced their own Parish Plans.

PPS Planning Policy Statement - A series of statements issued by central government to replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

RSS Regional Spatial Strategies - Regional Spatial Strategies replace the old Regional Planning Guidance and sets out the regions policies in relation to the development and use of land and forms part of the development plan.

SA Sustainability Appraisal - An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

SCP Sustainable Communities Plan- A report published by the Government in 2003 which identified Ashford as one of four areas in the UK where major growth should take place.

SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment - An environmental assessment of plans and programmes, including Development Plan Documents.

SPD Supplementary Planning Documents - These are being phased in to replace the Supplementary Planning Guidance, and are non-statutory documents that expand upon policies or proposals in the Development Plan Documents.

**Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre,
Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL**

Planning and Development

01233 330229

Email: ashfordldf@ashford.gov.uk

Large print copies, audio and Braille
versions of this
document are available by telephoning
Planning and Development on
(01233) 330229.

Also call this number if you would like a copy
of this document to be translated.