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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.

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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)

1. Preparation: Evidence gathering
   Informal Consultation

2. Publication: Consultation on Regulation 27
   Publication Document
   Sustainability Appraisal

3. Submission: Submission of DPD to Secretary of State
   Sustainability Appraisal

4. Independent Examination

5. Adoption of DPD

Binding Report issued to Council
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’ 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.
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:
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'. 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

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’.

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.

For further information please visit the Beacon Scheme website www.beacons.idea.gov.uk
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](http://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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultee Group</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Consultation techniques proposed for targeting group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors</td>
<td>Ashford Borough Councillors, Kent County Councillors</td>
<td>LDF Task Group and formal Council meetings, Workshops and meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Councils</td>
<td>Individual Parish Council chairman and clerks, Representatives from Parish Councils</td>
<td>Parish Forums, Community Workshops and meetings, Parish Council meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Interests</td>
<td>Local Companies - Rural and Urban, Ashford Chamber of Commerce, Ashford Town Centre Partnership</td>
<td>Workshop, meetings and focus groups, Business breakfasts, Briefings, Participation in exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Interests</td>
<td>Developers, landowners, house builders and consultants</td>
<td>Meetings and workshops, Housing Market Partnership, Business breakfasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Agencies</td>
<td>Ashford’s Future Company Board Members, Government Agencies, Local Strategic Partnership, Statutory consultees.</td>
<td>Workshops and meetings, Consult with partner agencies throughout the drafting of policy documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Interest Groups</td>
<td>The Borough and the wider area</td>
<td>Participation in workshops and exhibitions, Focus groups on specific issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultee Group</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Consultation techniques proposed for targeting group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| General Public  | • The Borough and the wider area | • Keep up to date on issues via the Council website and the media and press  
• Exhibitions and public events |
| Hard to Reach groups | • Young people, older people, ethnic minority groups, disabled people | • Specific tailored events within schools, colleges, community centres etc  
• Workshops, exhibitions and focus groups |
## Consultation Methods for Development Plan Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Techniques</th>
<th>Examples where we have utilised consultation Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation document</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formal opportunities for making representations on the draft documents in accordance with Government requirements at formal plan making stages.</td>
<td>Hard copies of DPDs and referenced background documents are available on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staffed exhibitions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exhibition outlining main issues and proposals with chance for face-to-face discussion with planning officers.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summary exhibition outlining main issues and proposals using a range of materials that capture interest and reaction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acting as an effective way of soliciting responses to published documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exhibitions will take place at times and be located at venues accessible to the widest possible audience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation Portal and website</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To provide basic information on the LDF process, timetable, outputs and all documents produced in a downloadable</td>
<td>To date the Council has successfully consulted on the following documents using the Consultation Portal:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
format conforming with e-government initiatives and accessible to all.

- To act as a consultation tool at the formal consultation stages, through viewing documents and submitting representations electronically: [www.ashford.gov.uk/consult](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/consult) and [www.ashford.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/ldf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Update (containing the LDF Newsletter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Informative six-monthly newsletter produced to highlight progress in the production of LDF documents, and provide information on proposed public consultation events, and where to obtain feedback from past consultations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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. <a href="http://www.ashford.gov.uk/ldf">Development Update</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops/Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Organised meetings / discussions to discuss specific issues in a structured forum and to obtain initial concepts and develop ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Generating structured discussions to establish consensus and to flag up areas of contention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Community Involvement in the Local Development Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide developers / landowners with the opportunity to promote their sites and set out their aspirations.</th>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing interface and working relations between consultants, agents, the council and key stakeholders, in order for key people to feed successfully into LDF process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Formal Adverts

| 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. | To date all statutory adverts have been placed in the Ashford and Tenterden editions of the Kentish Express newspaper, when required. |

#### Informal Adverts

| 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. | 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. 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. |
Table 3 Stages and Types of Consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Type of Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;-Evidence gathering&lt;br&gt;-Informal Consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Adverts</td>
<td>Used to alert people to early work on area-based elements of LDDs and seek, for example, site submissions from interested parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Workshops / meetings</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Update (containing the LDF Newsletter)</td>
<td>Raising awareness of general issues and work underway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping Document</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues and Options Report</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>LDF web pages will be kept up-to-date and show detail relating to active policy documents being prepared, the broad timings for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
consultation events proposed including how people can get involved in the process.

| Publication: Consultation on Regulation 27 Publication Document | Full consultation document available for inspection at principal Council offices and libraries during normal office hours. An electronic copy will be sent to all ‘specific’ consultation bodies and will be available to download from the Ashford Borough Council Consultation Portal |
| | The ability to consult online through the Ashford Borough Council Consultation Portal 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. |
| Online Consultation Portal and website | 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. |
| Letter / email notification from the Consultation Portal | Public notice in the local newspaper of the proposal matters and the places and times that the pre-submission documents can be inspected. |
| Formal Adverts | Website updated to inform people that the document has been submitted to the Secretary of State and Programme Officer details displayed. |
| Submission of DPD to Secretary of State | As required by Regulations - Public notice in the local newspaper stated that the document has been submitted and Programme Officer details displayed. |
Independent Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Document</th>
<th>Copies of Council evidence provided to those appearing, otherwise on demand – and at cost for commercial organisations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Information on examination arrangements. Representations made on submitted document displayed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Advert</td>
<td>As required by Regulations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal consultation targeted at interested parties and individuals and with representative organisations, to identify relevant issues issues and options prior to the start of the formal consultation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Publish the draft SPD documents on the Council's consultation Portal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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.
Figure 3: The Process of preparing and adopting Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Statement of Community Involvement

1. Preparation: Evidence gathering Informal Consultation

2. Publication: Consultation on Publication SPD

Consideration of ‘representations’ received and make amendments accordingly/ if necessary

5. Adoption of 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.
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 1000m$^2$ 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.
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 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.

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 and the “Gateway”, Ashford. If the application site lies within parishes of Tenterden, Woodchurch, High Halden, Biddenden, Rolvenden, Newenden, Wittersham and Stone then electronic copies of all live applications and accompanying plans will be available for inspection at the “Gateway” office in High Street, Tenterden.

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 days but this may be reduced to no less than 7 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 days but this may be reduced to no less than 7 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 agenda’s 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.
All Parish Councils will be notified of the publication of each planning committee agenda on the council’s website. This will be an email alert, normally sent a week before the meeting, to the parish clerk.

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.

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.

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.

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.
6 Resources and Management of the process

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. This forms part of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which is available on the Council’s website and is published in December each year. Listed below are the community involvement indicators that are used in this 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


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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDF Document</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashford Town Centre AAP</td>
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<td>Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenterden &amp; Rural Sites DPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chilmington Green / Discovery Park AAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheesemans Green / Waterbrook AAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generic DC policy DPD</td>
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<tr>
<th>Supplementary Planning Documents</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing SPD</td>
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<td>Sustainable Design &amp; Construction SPD</td>
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<td>Infrastructure Contributions SPD</td>
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<td>Residential Space &amp; Layout SPD</td>
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<td>Green Spaces &amp; Water Environment SPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadband &amp; Telecommunications SPD</td>
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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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Consultee for Ashford</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The regional planning body if the local planning authority’s area is in a region other than London</td>
<td>Government Office for the South East South East England Partnership Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority</td>
<td>Maidstone Borough Council&lt;br&gt;Shepway District Council&lt;br&gt;Swale Borough Council&lt;br&gt;Tunbridge Wells Borough Council&lt;br&gt;Rother District Council&lt;br&gt;Canterbury City Council&lt;br&gt;Kent County Council&lt;br&gt;East Sussex County Council&lt;br&gt;All Parish Councils in the Ashford Borough&lt;br&gt;Kent County Constabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Coal Authority</td>
<td>The Coal Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural England</td>
<td>Natural England</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Environment Agency</td>
<td>The Environment Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>Highways Agency&lt;br&gt;Network Rail&lt;br&gt;Channel Tunnel Rail link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Heritage</td>
<td>English Heritage South East Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority</td>
<td>South East England Development Agency</td>
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### Regulations

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<tr>
<th>Regulations</th>
<th>Consultee for Ashford</th>
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<tr>
<td>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 Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority</td>
<td>Mobile Operators Association (MOA) 3 O2 Orange T-mobile (UK) Limited Vodafone</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the council:  
  - primary care trust  
  - person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986  
  - sewage undertaker  
  - water undertaker. | 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 |
| The Homes and Communities agency - under transitional provisions, this will be a requirement from 6th April 2010 | The Homes and Communities Agency |

### 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
- Churches Together in Ashford
- Community Action South East Kent
- County Square Shopping Centre
- English Partnerships
- Gaxmudian Kurdish Community
- Halcrow Consulting Limited
- The Housing Corporation
- Kent Association of the Disabled People (Ashford Branch)
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- 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 prepared Explanatory Notes on the Office for Public Sector Information website www.opsi.gov.uk 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 carry out 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
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.

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

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

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**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.
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.