**Darlington Borough Draft Local Plan June 2018**

**Engagement Plan**

The Darlington Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016 sets out how the Council will involve local communities, businesses and key stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Plan and other planning documents. The SCI was prepared in line with national legislation and outlines general principles which will always be applied to our planning consultations / engagement activities. The principles include; we will communicate clearly, make sure it is easy to be involved, share information and feedback, and we will keep the process as simple as possible.

The SCI outlines that before we begin key stages of Local Plan preparation we will produce an engagement plan, setting out when and how we will consult/engage throughout the process. This will ensure that consideration is given to the most effective way of communicating the particular issue and that the methods engaged are proportionate.

The table below sets out the activities the Council is to undertake during the consultation on the Darlington Borough Draft Local Plan June 2018. The consultation is to run from 21st June until 2nd August 2018. The activities planned go beyond the basic legal requirements of plan preparation and aim to engage fully will all members of the community and stakeholders.

The overall aim of the strategy is to ensure as many people as possible in the borough know about the Local Plan and have some understanding of its content and context. The consultation material produced will help to prevent misinformation about the plan from circulating. The activities help to ensure that the consultation period is kept in the public eye for the whole six weeks and to encourage as many people as possible to engage with the consultation process.

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| **Activity**  | **Desired Aim/Outcome** |
| **Notification emails** and **letters** sent out to all consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database. | Basic requirement to notify those who have an interest in the Local Plan of the consultation; includes statutory and other consultees. For all activities there is an overall aim to gain feedback and comments on the contents of the Draft Local Plan from communities, businesses and key stakeholders. Comments can be on any parts of the plan including particular policies or sites.  |
| **Draft Local Plan –** The document can be viewed and commented on via the Councils new consultation portal at <https://darlington-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/> You can register at any time on the consultation portal and you will receive email notifications of future consultations on the Local Plan. Paper copies of the Draft Local Plan can also be viewed at the Town Hall, Central Library and Cockerton Library.  | Ensuring easy access to the document electronically and in hard copy for communities, businesses and key stakeholders. The consultation portal provides a user friendly way in which to submit comments.  |
| **Microsite** - Dedicated webpage for the Local Plan which contains all related documents and evidence base. Also includes a link to the consultation portal and online version of the Local Plan. The microsite is where all online/social media points too.  | Increasing awareness and knowledge of the Local Plan within communities inviting them to comment on the Draft Local Plan. Website covers the main theme areas of the plan. Enables people to gain different perspectives on key topics. Promoting a more open and transparent process of plan preparation to create a sense of shared ownership of the plan.  |
| **Social media –** To be used to publicise the consultation including Facebook and Twitter.  | Utilising social media to reach a younger and broader audience. It will not be used to try to explain the Local Plan or encourage debate. It will direct people to the microsite and to the drop in sessions with the planning policy team. It will be made clear that comments posted on social media will not be counted as part of the consultation.  |
| **Local media** – Article in Northern Echo outlining Local Plan preparation and consultation.Article published in Northern Echo 27th May prior to the consultation. | It is anticipated that an article will be published in the local newspaper during the consultation period. This is the main outlet for people to get news from the local media. Increasing awareness of the Draft Local Plan and the consultation.Article published prior to the consultation also aimed to increase awareness.  |
| **One Darlington Magazine** - Council magazine delivered to every house in the borough. The Local Plan has been featured in the magazine on a number of occasions. Has included question and answers with senior officers, progress reports and consultation notification.  | Increasing awareness and knowledge of the Local Plan within communities inviting them to comment on the Draft Local Plan. |
| **Business Darlington e-Newsletter –** Article in business in Darlington e-newsletter which is created by the Council’s Business Support team aiming to provide relevant news and information to local businesses. Short article on the Draft Local Plan consultation which directs readers to the Council’s microsite. | Increasing awareness and knowledge of the Local Plan with local businesses inviting them to comment on the Draft Local Plan.  |
| **Live Property Forum Debate –** Took place on the 5th June where a senior council officer and the portfolio holder for economy and regeneration presented the Draft Local Plan to a local property forum (property owners, estate agents, letting agents and surveyors).  | Raising awareness of the Draft Local Plan with the property industry. Discussing the aims and objectives of the plan, the key issues for the industry and inviting then to comment. The live debate which could be viewed on the internet also allowed communities and other stakeholders to listen to the discussions and to understand different perspectives.   |
| **Exhibition –** In the reception area of the Town Hall there will be information boards and maps which explain and provide information on the Draft Local Plan consultation. This will be in place when the display is not in use at the drop in sessions below.  | The display will assist in raising awareness of the consultation and Draft Local Plan with a range of people who are visiting the town hall.  |
| **Drop in sessions** – Minimum of 6 sessions held across a variety of times and days (including weekends and evenings) where the exhibition will be available to view and planning officers will be attendance to answer any questions. Promoted via social media, website and One Darlington magazine. If requested by particular groups additional sessions will be organised where possible. Drop in sessions* Sat 30th June 10am – 4pm Darlington Community Carnival, Stanhope Park.
* Thurs 5th July 10am – 2pm Dolphin Centre
* Sat 14th July 10am – 4pm Festival of Ingenuity, Market Square, Darlington
* Tuesday 17th July 2pm – 6pm Dolphin Centre
* Sat 28th July 11am – 3pm Dolphin Centre
* Monday 30th July 3pm – 7pm Dolphin Centre
 | Displaying information in a user friendly way outlining the aims and objectives of the Local Plan, content and process. Encouraging new people to participate in plan making and to provide comments on the draft document. Officers available to answer questions and queries enabling more personal contact. Increasing knowledge and understanding of the Local Plan and planning matters. Promoting discussion about how certain areas could develop and change over the plan period.  |
| **College drop in sessions -** A number of sessions are also scheduled to take place at local colleges. The exhibition will be displayed at certain times and a planning officer in attendance supported by local students.College drop in sessions Thur 28th June 11am – 1pm Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.Tue 3rd July 11am – 1pm Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form CollegeWed 4th July 8am – 10:30am – Darlington College  | To engage with younger generations of the population and to increase their awareness of the Local Plan, planning matters in general and how they can get involved.  |

All comments will be recorded and published on the Local Plan Consultation Portal, alongside the name of the person or organisation making the comment. The key issues raised by the consultation will be identified. A report will be prepared on the consultation which will include a summary of the key issues as well as officer responses which will be made available. All comments submitted will be utilised to inform the next stage of the plan making process.