



# Lancashire Statement of Community Involvement

A statement of our policy towards public involvement in the Councils decision-making process for planning policy production and planning application deliberation: if you are interested in getting involved in planning decisions, then this document will explain how you can do that.

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This document describes the Council's policy towards public involvement in the Council's decision-making process for planning policy production and planning applications. However it must be recognised that the nature and the object of consultation must relate to the circumstances which call for it. In interpreting this policy, a mechanistic approach to the requirements of consultation should be avoided; some methods or practices will be appropriate under certain circumstances, but under others will be inappropriate.

Appendix A to this document has been amended in January 2017 to reflect library closures.

# Community Involvement in Planning Policy Production

Lancashire County Council (the Council) is responsible for development plan functions within its area in respect of minerals and waste developments. As such it prepares and maintains land use planning policies (contained in a Local Plan) and if necessary guidance (contained in a supplementary planning document) on minerals and waste.

The Council carries out this function jointly with Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (the Joint Authorities). Each of the councils that make up the Joint Authorities will have a separate Statement of Community Involvement. This section relates to operations within the administrative boundary of Lancashire County Council.

Although the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be produced jointly, each of the authorities will work independently in respect of development management matters.

## Stages of Preparation and Consultation

There will always be at least two stages in the production of any planning document. The key stages are described below. Further information on the stages of plan production, and when they can be expected to occur, can be found on the Council's website and in the adopted Local Development Scheme.

### ***Pre-production***

This is an on-going process of evidence gathering and monitoring. The County will, when necessary, publish a monitoring report, and a local aggregate assessment and local waste assessment.

As part of this we may seek informal discussions with relevant bodies<sup>1</sup> to develop and update our evidence base to ensure that it remains robust.

### ***Production***

We will consult all relevant bodies, to inform issues and develop options. During this stage there may be one or more consultations, depending on the subject matter and the requirements of the regulations<sup>2</sup>. If representations are received that raise new issues that have not previously been considered and that result in the need for a significant change in the Local Plan, then there is likely to be a need for a subsequent consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> Who constitutes the relevant bodies is likely to vary depending on the nature of the subject matter and the stage of the documents production. They are likely to include relevant government bodies, charities, elected representatives, local authorities, businesses, landowners, interest groups, the public, including hard-to-reach groups, and those in neighbouring authorities or further afield where materially affected. Some of these are prescribed under the regulations.

<sup>2</sup> Principally the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

By the end of the production stage the community and all other stakeholders should have had the opportunity to get involved and have their views considered.

### ***Examination***

Before the Local Plan can be adopted it must be submitted for independent examination by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The role of the inspector is to carry out an assessment of the soundness<sup>3</sup> of the document and to ensure that it satisfies the requirements for its preparation set out in the relevant regulations. If you have submitted comments you may have the opportunity to address the inspector as part of the examination.

If the examination raises issues that result in the need for a significant change in the Local Plan, in particular if it affects its soundness, then there is likely to be a need for a subsequent consultation.

## **Methods of Notification and Consultation**

At each of these stages the Council will notify relevant bodies of consultations, and listen to what they have to say. The following sections describe the principles that the Council will apply in carrying out consultations; though some may not be applicable at each stage, depending on the nature of the consultation.

### ***Seek comments***

- Invite comments on consultation documents at a time in the process when they can inform the process.
- Provide sufficient information to describe the subject matter of the consultation.
- Give notice of consultations in advance.
- Clearly describe start and end dates of the consultation period.
- Clearly describe how to submit comments.
- Consider the representations received prior to moving on to the next stage.
- Acknowledge representations that have been received electronically.
- Where appropriate hold staffed public exhibitions, particularly if a proposal is locally controversial.
- Where appropriate hold workshops or focus groups.

### ***Notification of consultation***

Notification will be through a combination of direct and indirect methods.

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<sup>3</sup> A definition of soundness can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework

**Direct notification:**

- Seek to identify and contact by email or letter organisations or bodies relevant to the subject matter of the consultation<sup>4</sup>. This may include any neighbours adjacent to or considered to be materially affected by a site specific allocation.
- Contact by email or letter all consultees that have asked to be kept informed of minerals and waste documents by requesting to be added to the consultation database.

**Indirect notification:**

- Publish a notice on the Council's website with details of the consultation.
- Produce a notice to be displayed at the deposit points described in Appendix A with details of the consultation, to assist in raising awareness in the general public.
- Produce a notice with details of the consultation to be sent to parish councils, for them to consider whether to display on the parish notice board, to assist in raising awareness in the general public.
- Publish a press release, after direct notifications have been sent out, to assist in raising awareness in the general public.
- Publish an up to date production programme for any minerals or waste planning documents in production in the Local Development Scheme, with a description of any delays or updates on the Council's website, so individuals and businesses will have the opportunity to determine at which stage they should participate in policy production.

***Maintain database of interested persons***

- We will maintain a database of people who wish to be notified of minerals and waste planning policy matters.
- Consultation documents will include a reference to the database, where individuals and organizations will be invited to register on the database to receive future notifications.
- Persons or organisations who would like to be involved in the preparation of minerals and waste documents may request to be placed on this database by the Council at [LMWF@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:LMWF@lancashire.gov.uk) or by sending their details to address below:

Strategy and Policy Group  
Lancashire County Council  
County Hall  
Pitt Street  
Preston  
PR1 0LD

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<sup>4</sup> Who we notify directly is likely to vary depending on the subject matter of the consultation and the stage of the documents production.

### ***Transparent process***

- Produce an outcomes report summarising the comments received during a consultation, and describing how they have been addressed by the drafting process.
- Produce documents using easy to understand language, especially summary information.
- Maintain a central webpage, acting as a directory, with links to past stages.
- Include a timeline setting out past and future stages of production within consultation documents.
- Produce a newsletter, for circulation to consultees registered on the database, summarising the future and past programme of minerals and waste documents, so individuals and businesses will have the opportunity to determine at which stage they should participate in policy production.

### ***Accessible process***

- Provide different methods of viewing consultation documents, including paper copies at deposit points throughout the County (more information on deposit points is provided in Appendix A), and online.
- Provide different means of commenting on consultation documents, including post, email and online.
- Be mindful of document size (including digital file size) when producing consultation material.
- Provide contact details on consultation documents to enable consultees to resolve any queries raised by the consultation documents.
- Produce documents using a readable font, size and colour.
- Hold staffed public exhibitions at accessible locations, at accessible times, close to populations affected; using a greeter where possible to identify the specific needs of individual consultees.

# Community Involvement in Planning Applications

Lancashire County Council (the Council) is responsible for development management functions within its area in respect of 'county matters'. Planning applications on county matters may be defined as:

- Minerals development including the winning and working of minerals and the carrying out of testing of deposits;
- Waste development, including development designed to be used principally for treating and storing waste, the sorting/processing of waste, the transferring or transporting of waste, the disposal of refuse/waste materials, the use of waste for renewable energy;
- Operations and uses in addition to the purposes above, including development relating to access to highways.
- The Council must obtain planning permission for any development it proposes to carry out. This can include applications for school extensions, the provision of new schools, development associated with social services, libraries and museums, the laying out of new highways, the erection of visitor and interpretation centres in country parks and improvements to the public rights of way network across Lancashire.

Planning applications to carry out development in respect of county matter development must be submitted to, and are determined by the Council unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of State. The main policy frameworks for determining applications are:

- The Lancashire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy
- The Lancashire Minerals and Waste Site Allocation and Development Management Policies
- District Local Plans
- Districts Neighbourhood Plans
- National Planning Policy Framework

This section sets out the principles for community involvement for planning applications that will be determined by the Council. These will form the basis of guidance for applicants with regard to community engagement and consultation, and will be in addition to existing consultation and publicity practises employed by the Council once a valid planning application is received.

## Pre-application

The Council encourages applicants to engage in pre-application discussions with planning officers. The focus of these meetings is to provide the applicant with guidance relating to the information required for proper consideration of the

application. It is an opportunity where key issues and policies that the applicants' proposals should take into account, may be identified.

The Development Management group actively engages in pre-application discussions with every applicant or agent who requests them. At the time of discussion, the applicant and a planning officer discuss the proposals in full, and consider both the extent of consultation required and other details relating to the application. Throughout the discussion, advice given will be as accurate and objective as possible, but will also be informal and will reflect the individual case officer's interpretation of planning policy and highway guidance. Advice given cannot be interpreted as being indicative of the outcome of the application. A charge for the advice may be made in accordance with a charging policy depending on the type of advice sought.

Applicants can also write to the Council to ask for advice, and a response will normally be made within 10 working days of receipt. However, this may take longer if advice from other bodies is sought. Where a screening opinion is requested (a determination of whether or not a development should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment), this is provided in accordance with the time periods set out in regulations<sup>5</sup>.

Proposals that are likely to have significant effects upon the environment may require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before the Council make a decision. The need for an EIA will be discussed in the pre-application meeting, along with the need for a scoping opinion. At this time, the applicant will be made aware that the Council may take 16 weeks to deal with the planning applications accompanied by an Environment Statement (13 weeks for a 'major' application without an EIA).

## Early Community Consultation

During any pre-application meeting with the planning officers, the consultation requirements for the application will be discussed. If an application is viewed to be potentially contentious, wider scale public consultation by the developer may be necessary before the planning application is submitted. The purpose of such consultation would be to allow the developer to explain their initial ideas and to obtain the views of the local community and stakeholders.

Such an approach brings benefits to all those involved by allowing accurate information to be presented to the community. In addition, by making provision for amendments early in the process, the applicant may avoid the inconvenience of having to make substantial amendments to an application at an advanced stage of the process.

There are several ways that an applicant could further involve the community including:

- Circulating leaflets to residents that outline draft proposals.
- Arranging meetings or exhibitions with community and other local interest groups.

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<sup>5</sup> Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulation 2011

- Requesting feedback within a specified time-scale (allowing changes to be made to documents before plans are finalised).

The Council cannot refuse to validate a planning application purely on the basis that the applicant has failed to carry out enough pre-application community engagement. However, where this does occur, it could delay consideration of the application, as unresolved material planning objections may need to be referred to an applicant. If the application cannot be determined within 13 weeks (major applications) of the date of validation or 16 weeks where it is accompanied by an EIA, then the Council will request a time extension setting out the reason for such. If there is no agreement to a time extension the application may be determined on its merits and on the information before the Council.

### ***Public Meetings and Exhibitions***

For larger scale or controversial proposals, the Council recommends that the applicant holds public meetings or exhibitions. When arranging these events, the applicant may wish to consider the following:

- **Publicity:** This could be in form of letters to householders or an advert/press release in the local press giving adequate notice, posters in the locale and prior notification to the Parish and any local interest groups.
- **Venue - Location:** It would be beneficial if the event were held on the application site/building, or at a venue as close as possible to the application site.
- **Venue - Accessibility:** To allow as wide a sector of the community to attend as possible, venues should be fully accessible, alternatively, reasonable adjustments could be made to permit access for people with disabilities or provide transport.
- **Timing of Event:** Events could take place at a time that enable a wide cross section of the public to attend, including weekends and evenings.
- **Presentation Material:** Should be clear and easily understandable and in a choice of formats – hard copies or disc. Web sites where information can be accessed would be useful.

### ***Consultation Statement***

Applicants are encouraged to submit a consultation statement with their planning application, which sets out the community engagement already undertaken, including:

- The scale of the notification, including a list of properties and businesses contacted; List of interest/community groups or other organisation contacted;
- Location and duration of any events held;
- Summary of all the comments received and issues raised;

- A clear indication of which comments have resulted in amendments to the scheme and what those changes are, and which comments have not, and why not;
- Any comments by groups or individuals about the public engagement process.

The applicant should retain all consultation responses as a record of the measures they have undertaken to ensure effective community involvement. The information gathered may be included in the officer's report when the application is submitted for determination.

## Planning Applications

The Council has an adopted Charter for the Development Management Service, this sets out the current practice on publicity and notification, including standards to be expected by users of the service, progress and targets. It also provides a code of practice for publicity of planning applications, which goes beyond legal requirements. There are certain statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications, with specific requirements depending on the scale and nature of the development proposed, these requirements are set out in the Charter. Consultation and notification procedures currently employed by the Council are outlined below:

- Display of notices at the proposed site and in the local press: The Council must advertise all planning applications by notice at the site, and also by advertising in the local press. These notices contain details of where and when the application can be viewed, and how to make and submit comments and the time period within which to do so.
- Daily updated electronic register of new applications, updates on current applications and decisions taken: A list of current planning applications may be accessed through the Council's Development Management webpage.
- Copies of proposals and other plans available for inspection during working hours: A copy of all planning applications is available for people to view at the Council's office and the relevant district council office during normal office hours. A planning officer will also be available during office hours by appointment to explain the proposals, if required.
- Neighbour notification: The Council notifies, where appropriate those owners and occupiers that are adjacent to a proposal, or may be materially affected by it.
- Consultation with other groups: The bodies and organisations the Council is required to consult are set out in planning legislation and regulations. At a local level, the Council must always consult the district and parish council within whose administrative boundary the development is proposed. In addition, contact is made with any interest groups.
- Elected Members: All county councillors whose ward includes the application site and any district, town or parish council whose area includes or adjoins the site are informed.

- Right to speak at Committee: Anyone can comment on a planning application. All comments received are summarised and included and addressed in the officer report on the application which is either presented to the Committee for determination or determined by an officer in accordance with the county councils scheme of delegation. Those who wish to speak at committee will need to give at least three working days' notice. Further details on this process can be found on the Development Management group webpage.

## **Development Control Committee**

The Development Control Committee determines on planning applications. The committee is comprised of 15 councillors and meets approximately every six weeks at County Hall in Preston.

The people who can usually speak at meetings are:

- Anyone objecting to the planning application.
- Anyone in favour of the proposal (usually the applicant).

Each person will be limited to four minutes. If you have written down what you want to say, you can give a copy of this to the councillors.

Once the committee has determined a planning application, a decision notice will be issued within three working days from the date of the committee resolution. Details of planning applications and decisions are available on the Councils dedicated webpages at [www.lancashire.gov.uk/planningregister](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/planningregister)

## Appendix A - List of Deposit Points

Settlement	Facility	Contact Number
Accrington	<b>Accrington Library</b> St James Street BB5 1NQ	01254 872385
	<b>Hyndburn Council Offices</b> Scaitcliffe House Ormerod Street BB5 0PF	01254 388111
Adlington	<b>Adlington Library</b> Railway Road PR6 9RG	01257 480525
Bacup	<b>Bacup Library</b> St James Square OL13 9AH	01772 443401
	<b>Rossendale BC One Stop Shop</b> The business Centre Futures Park Bacup OL13 0BB	01706 217777
Barnoldswick	<b>Barnoldswick Library</b> Fernlea Ave BB18 5DW	01282 812147
Brierfield	<b>Brierfield Library</b> Colne Road BB9 5HW	01772 539305
Burnley	<b>Council Offices</b> Town Hall Manchester Road BB11 9SA	01282 425011
	<b>Burnley Library</b> Grimshaw Street	01282 437115

	BB11 2BD	
	<b>County Information Centre</b> The Bus Station Croft Street BB11 2EJ	01282 423125
	<b>Coal Clough Library</b> Coal Clough Lane BB11 4NW	01282 455570
<b>Burscough</b>	<b>Burscough Library</b> Mill Lane L40 5TJ	01704 892334
<b>Carnforth</b>	<b>Carnforth Library</b> Lancaster Road LA5 9DZ	01524 732815
<b>Chorley</b>	<b>Civic Offices</b> Union Street PR7 1AL	01257 515151
	<b>Clayton Green Library</b> Clayton Green Business Park Library Road PR6 7EN	0300 123 6703
	<b>Chorley Library</b> Union Street PR7 1EB	01257 277222
	<b>Coppull Library</b> Spendmore Lane PR7 5DF	01257 791426
<b>Clitheroe</b>	<b>Ribble Valley BC Council offices</b> Church walk BB7 2RA	01200 425111
	<b>Clitheroe Library</b> Church Street BB7 2DG	01200 428788
<b>Colne</b>	<b>Colne Town Hall</b>	01282 661224

	Albert Road BB8 0AQ	
	<b>Colne Library</b> High Street Earls CO6 2PA	01787 223565
<b>Eccleston</b>	<b>Eccleston Library</b> 101 Broadway WA10 5PJ	01744 677575
<b>Euxton</b>	<b>Euxton Library</b> St Marys Gate PR7 6AH	01257 265430
<b>Fence</b>	<b>Wheatley Lane Library</b> Wheatley Close BB12 9QH	01772 539308
<b>Fleetwood</b>	<b>Fleetwood Library</b> North Albert Street FY7 6AJ	01253 775800
<b>Fulwood</b>	<b>Sharoe Green Library</b> 8 Sharoe Green Lane PR2 8ED	01772 539327
<b>Garstang</b>	<b>Garstang Library</b> Windsor Road PR3 1ED	01995 604052
<b>Halton</b>	<b>Halton Library</b> Penny Stone Road LA2 6QE	01524 732815
<b>Haslington</b>	<b>Haslington Library</b> Deardengate BB4 5QL	01706 215690
<b>Heysham</b>	<b>Heysham Library</b> 396-398 Heysham Road LA3 2BJ	01524 851530
<b>Ingol</b>	<b>Ingol Library</b> Ventnor Place, Off Tag Lane	01772 539384

	PR2 3YX	
<b>Kirkham</b>	<b>Kirkham Library</b> Station Road PR4 2HD	01254 872385
<b>Knott End-on-Sea</b>	<b>Knott End Library</b> 26 Lancaster Rd FY6 0AU	01253 810632
<b>Lancaster</b>	<b>Customer Service Centre</b> Town Hall Dalton Square LA1 1PJ	01524 582000
	<b>Lancaster Library</b> Market Square LA1 1HY	01524 580700
<b>Leyland</b>	<b>South Ribble Borough Council</b> Civic Centre West Paddock PR25 1DH	01772 421491
	<b>Leyland Library</b> Lancaster gate PR25 2EX	01772 458500
<b>Longton</b>	<b>Longton Library</b> Liverpool Road PR4 5HA	01772 617401
<b>Longridge</b>	<b>Longridge Library</b> Berry Lane PR3 3JA	01772 539330
<b>Lytham</b>	<b>Ansdell Library</b> 59 Commonside FY8 4DJ	01253 738554
<b>Morecambe</b>	<b>Morecambe Town Hall</b> Marine Road LA4 5AF	01524 422929
	<b>County Information Centre</b>	01524 582808

	The old station buildings Central Promenade LA4 4DB	
	<b>Morecambe Library</b> Central Drive LA4 5DL	01524 415215
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>Nelson Library</b> Market Sq. BB9 7PU	01282 692511
	<b>County Information Centre</b> The Bus Station Broadway BB9 9SJ	01282 698533
<b>Ormskirk</b>	<b>Ormskirk Library</b> Burscough St L39 2EN	01695 573448
<b>Padiham</b>	<b>Padiham Library</b> Town Hall Burnley Road BB12 8BS	01282 682705
	<b>Town Hall</b> Burnley Road BB12 8BS	01282 682705
<b>Penwortham</b>	<b>Kingsfold Library</b> Hawksbury Drive PR1 9EJ	01772 744457
<b>Poulton-le-Fylde</b>	<b>Wyre Borough Council</b> Civic Centre Breck Road FY6 7PU	01253 891000
<b>Preston</b>	<b>County Information Centre</b> The Bus Station PR1 1YT	01772 556618

	<b>Lancashire County Council offices</b> County Hall Pitt Street PR1 8XJ	0845 0530000
	<b>Preston City Council Offices</b> Town Hall Lancaster Road PR1 2RL	01772 906900
	<b>Harris Library</b> Market Square PR1 2PP	01772 536010
<b>Rawtenstall</b>	<b>County Information Centre</b> Queen's Square Haslingdon Rd BB4 6QU	01706 234694
	<b>Rawtenstall Library</b> Queens Square BB4 6QU	01706 227911
<b>Ribbleton</b>	<b>Ribbleton Library</b> Ribbleton Hall Drive PR2 6EE	01772 539361
<b>Saint Annes</b>	<b>Council Offices</b> 292 Clifton Drive South FY8 1LH	01253 658 658
	<b>St Annes Library</b> Clifton Drive South FY8 1NR	01253 643900
<b>Savick</b>	<b>Savick Library</b> West Park Avenue PR2 1UH	01772 539320
<b>Skelmersdale</b>	<b>Skelmersdale Library</b> Southway WN8 6NL	01695 720312
<b>Tarleton</b>	<b>Tarleton Library</b>	01772 815179

	Mark Square PR4 6TU	
<b>Thornton-Cleveleys</b>	<b>Anchorsholme Library</b> Luton Road FY5 3RS	01253 853588
<b>Whitworth</b>	<b>Whitworth Library</b> Lloyd Street OL12 8AA	01772 539316
	<b>Whitworth Town Council Offices</b> Civic Hall (The Riverside) Market Street OL12 8DP	01706 852018