

Ashfield District Council – Statement of Community Involvement (2015)  
Consultation Statement (October 2015)

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Ashfield District Council produced a revised draft Statement of Community Involvement during August 2015 which will replace the previous document published in July 2013.

Following the Council's withdrawal of the Submission Local Plan in July 2014, the Council undertake a range of new evidence base work and drafted a new timetable to resubmit its draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State. As part of this process it was felt appropriate to ensure the SCI was up to date, reflecting this process.

As a statement of how the Council is proposing to engage communities and stakeholders in the planning process, the Council feels it is important to consult on the draft statement. As such, the Council is undertook a 4 week period of consultation between Friday 11th September and Friday 23rd October.

During this period of consultation the Council received 9 representation from the following:

1. Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership
2. The Woodland Trust
3. Highways England
4. Nottinghamshire County Council (Public Health)
5. Historic England
6. Natural England
7. Homes & Communities Agency
8. Equality and Human Rights Commission
9. Annesley Community Committed to Ensuring Sustainable Settlements (ACCESS)

A summary of the representations made, together with the Council's response is detailed below. Complete representations can be viewed by contacting the Forward Planning Team at [localplan@Ashfield-dc.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@Ashfield-dc.gov.uk).

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Representation	Summary of Representation	Council Response
<p>1. Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership</p>	<p>We have reviewed the SCI and make the following comments:</p> <p><u>Duty to Co-operate</u>            We are satisfied that you have identified the LNP as a statutory consulted. The LNP needs to be consulted at key stages of the planning process including Local Development Scheme, evidence gathering, sustainability appraisals, the local plan, SPGs, SPDs, and Monitoring Reviews.</p> <p><u>Main Aims of SIC</u>            We welcome the four principles in your approach to consultation. The LNP recognises the front loading principle as key in achieving effective co-operation at the earliest stage. Attached is our planning approach towards strategic local plans. Working at the earliest opportunity allows embedment of natural capital data, priority issues and LNP strategies into your local plan.</p> <p><i>Can you ensure that you engage the LNP at the earliest possible stages of initial evidence gathering so we and our partners can support you to develop and implement your local plan.</i></p> <p>The LNP would appreciate a constructive dialogue with Ashfield District Council that through mutual co-operation delivers a sustainable development plan to promote a</p>	<p>The Council welcomes the comments received from the Local Nature Partnership and look forward to working within them.</p>

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	strong economy to serve the people of Ashfield and their future generations	
2. The Woodland Trust	<p>We welcome the inclusion of Woodland Trust as a consultee in Appendix 3 of your draft Statement of Community Involvement.</p> <p>We would be interested in being consulted on any planning applications or planning policy documents which have relevance to trees and woodland. For planning applications, we are particularly interested in those which may have an adverse impact (either directly or indirectly) on any area of ancient woodland or an ancient or veteran tree.</p>	The Council welcomes the comments made by the Woodland Trust and will continue to ensure the Trust is consulted on relevant planning policy documents and planning applications.
3. Highways England	<p>It welcomes the Council’s commitment to engaging with local communities, stakeholders, businesses and other organisations in the development of the District by ensuring it remains a “core activity within the planning process”.</p> <p>Highways England welcomes the variety of consultation methods outlined in the SCI which the Council intends to use to inform and consult. This variety should assist the entire cross-section of the community to get involved in the consultation process.</p> <p>Highways England also notes that it is listed as a statutory consultee and this is welcomed as a means of ensuring that it will remain informed</p>	The Council welcomes the comments made by Highways England and will continue to ensure they are involved and engaged in the planning process in Ashfield.

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	and engaged with Ashfield District Council in its local planning activities.	
4. Nottinghamshire County Council (Public Health)	<p>Public Health welcomes the statement of community involvement which sets out Ashfield District Council’s policy and approach to public consultation and involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan and the determination of planning applications. There are a couple of amendments required on page 26:</p> <p>NHS Nottinghamshire County (Primary Care Trust) – this is no longer in existence (ceased being an organisation on 31st March 2013) and needs to be amended to Mansfield and Ashfield Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England and Public Health, Nottinghamshire County Council.</p>	The Council welcomes the comment made by the County Council’s Public Health Department and will amend page 26 of the SCI to reflect the comments submitted.
5. Historic England	Historic England have no detailed comments to make, however we welcome recognition of our role as statutory consultee within the document.	The Council welcomes the comments received by Historic England.
6. Natural England	<p>We are supportive of the principle of meaningful and early engagement of the general community, community organisations and statutory bodies in local planning matters, both in terms of shaping policy and participating in the process of determining planning applications.</p> <p>However, we have no specific comments to make on this consultation.</p>	The Council welcomes the comments received by Natural England.
7. Homes & Communities Agency	Having reviewed the Statement of Community Involvement, the Agency has no comment to	The Council welcomes the comments received by the Homes & Communities Agency.

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	make other than to support the overall proposals.	
8. Equality and Human Rights Commission	<p>The Commission does not have the resources to respond to all consultations, and it is not our practice to respond to consultations on local plans or infrastructure projects unless they raise a clear or significant equality or human rights concern.</p> <p>Local authorities have obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 to consider the effect of their policies and decisions. The Commission provides guidance on these obligations.</p>	The Council welcomes the comments received by Equality and Human Rights Commission.
9. Annesley Community Committed to Ensuring Sustainable Settlements (ACCESS)	<p>Page 4, Item 1.5                  You list various documents in which you state that previous publications took place. We can see no evidence of “Technical Paper, Green Belt Review, dated 2012”.</p> <p>Would you please inform us of the current position of this paper, why it has been omitted from this list, and if designated “void”, under what reasons is it no longer deemed current and what are the present arrangements to update it?</p> <p>Page 5, Item 1.7 “providing feedback”                  We welcome the improvement of providing transparency on the Council’s decision making, which we feel has been missing somewhat along with consistency in the past. Could you please</p>	<p>Page 4, item 1.5 relates to the previous draft Local Plans. It does not related to the evidence base.</p> <p>Technical Paper, Green Belt Review (2012) remains part of the Local Plan evidence base.</p> <p>Page 5, 1.7 – This document is an example of how the Council will feedback comments received by the public. On planning applications, details will be included within Officer reports.</p>

	<p>quote an example on how this feedback will be undertaken.</p> <p>It is our recollection of many of ADC documents including this document, (it is stated as being a revised draft – where are the previous revisions?) that whilst there is good policy intent of reviewing these, that in practice this falls down. Documents are not reviewed, nor are the general public aware of when the review dates should be or have been. All documents should have a pedigree table inserted.</p> <p>Page 8, item 3.3 and 3.5                  ACCESS asks that the Council considers its tardy response and achievements in achieving past targets, and rather than give the public the minimum response period, that this be extended to 9 weeks. This will give confidence that the Council indeed intend to work with, and engage meaningfully with stakeholders and interested parties and also capture and allow responses in the shift to localism, in what is a Plan which has to last for 15 years.</p> <p>Page 9 Item 3.9 and 3.11                  ACCESS asks to be entered onto an Interested Party register for all publications and notifications concerning the Draft local plan and all associated documents.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges this comments and will seek to ensure where appropriate, details are given of previous revisions to documents.</p> <p>The Council wish to ensure the communities of Ashfield have sufficient time to respond to draft planning documents. The Council’s proposed 6 week period is a minimum requirement and where possible it may seek to extend this period. However, due to the Government’s deadline for producing a Local Plan by early 2017, the Council has limited scope to expand the consultation periods.</p> <p>ACCESS are on the Local Plan Consultation Database</p>
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	<p>Page 10, Item 4.1 last 2 bullet points.   <i>To identify the favoured options from all the ideas ‘brought to the table’. Sustainability appraisals and environmental assessments will also be prepared which can strengthen the overall picture.</i></p> <p>We know that the Inspector shared our concern about the ranking system employed in the appraisals. ACCESS asks, that it, be forwarded the principles and ranking mechanisms, which the council intend to use on these appraisals.</p> <p>Page 11, Item 4.2 – 4th Bullet point        Please inform ACCESS what you deem a reasonable time – not defining the expected time span is unreasonable.</p> <p>Page 11/12, Item 4.6, 4.7, 4.8        (4.6) It is stated that the “Duty of Care” places you under a requirement to engage with local planning authorities</p> <p>ACCESS asks that you provide a list of such meetings, topics and dates, and the outcome of any such joint collaborative meetings where these joint discussions have taken place, particularly with Newark &amp; Sherwood District Council and/or Mansfield District Council. Please take this as a Freedom of Information Act requirement.</p>	<p>The Sustainability Appraisal used to assess the Local Plan will form part of the public consultation.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report can be viewed on the Council’s website.</p> <p>The Council is unable to commit to defined time as the response time will depend on the amount of responses requiring acknowledgement and the resources the Council has.</p> <p>Freedom of Information Requested must be submitted to the Council via the appropriate mechanism.</p> <p>The Council has jointly commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment with Mansfield and Newark &amp; Sherwood. The District Council also attends County Meetings which bring all the Nottinghamshire Councils together to update one another of planning matters and share information.</p>
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	<p><b>Page 15, item 6.6.</b> ACCESS asks for better and clearer determination of what is a large scale proposal. Given that previous consultations have suggested housing density in the order of 30 /35 dwellings per hectare, could the Council state or introduce another segment such as of housing numbers.</p>	<p>As detailed within paragraph 6.6, the exact parameters that may be applied as a result of the Localism Act have yet to be defined by the Government. As stated, the Council believes it is likely that:</p> <p><i>it will only relate to very large scale proposals, probably development with a floor area of 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or more or where the site area is 2 hectares or more</i></p> <p>but this has yet to be confirmed by the Government.</p>
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