

**Eden Local Plan:
Statement of Community
Involvement**

December 2013

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EdenDistrictCouncil



EdenCouncil

Statement of Community Involvement

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Further information regarding the Statement of Community Involvement and the Local Plan generally can be found on the Council's website www.eden.gov.uk

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This document can be made available in large print on request

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1. Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council's approach for involving people in both the preparation of the new Local Plan. This will cover the whole of Eden District that lies outside the Lake District National Park.

This document identifies:

- The types of groups and individuals that will be directly asked to comment on the Local Plan.
- The times that specific consultees and the general public can become involved.
- The ways that the Council will enable this community involvement.

Many of the activities identified within this Statement of Community Involvement are currently undertaken by the Council, and the document is designed to formalise the methods used and clearly demonstrate to the public and stakeholders that they will be involved, that their views will be taken into account and when and how they can become actively involved in the local planning process.

Production of a Statement of Community Involvement is also a legal requirement under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and forms one of the tests of 'soundness' that a Local Plan must pass if it is to be adopted. This means we will have to demonstrate that we have complied with this document if we want to adopt our Local Plan.

2. The Council's principles for consultation

- Eden District Council will endeavour to reach decisions in the light of appropriate and effective consultation, conducted on and off-line with service users and stakeholders.
- The Council will ensure guidance to on and off-line consultation processes is made available via the Internet, the website and social media; also via consultation seminars or 'drop in' events.
- We will seek efficient and cost effective methods of consultation which uphold quality standards.
- We will clearly identify who is being consulted.
- We will seek to identify barriers to effective consultation and prioritise inclusion of hard to reach groups, to enable engagement with all those whose views are often invisible.
- We will explain to people why we are consulting and how their views will be taken into account.

- We will aim to provide effective information on consultation issues and matters of public information.
- We will seek to explain issues clearly to all the audiences we wish to reach and make responding easy, both on and off-line.
- In organising the consultation, we will provide a summary of the main issues, a clear set of questions, and ability to make comments.
- In relation to on-line consultations, we will provide a broad range of background information to ensure stakeholders have good opportunity to form opinions on the basis of balanced information.
- We will allow enough time for respondents to consider the issues and make their views known.
- We will ensure that all responses are carefully and open-mindedly analysed to reflect a range of views.
- We will link findings from the consultation process with decisions, and explain reasons for our decisions, in particular where these go counter to the views expressed during the consultation.
- We will introduce the use of emails for both staff and the public who register interest, to inform them about new consultations and/or of the published outcomes of completed consultations in their areas of interest.
- We will ensure evaluation of the effectiveness of the whole consultation process is a fundamental part of consultation design.
- The Council's Communication Officer will help to co-ordinate publicity and promotion of the Local Plan by issuing media releases, updating social media and producing the Council's magazine 'All About Eden' and assisting to co-ordinate events organised or supported by the Council.

3. Who we will consult

- Other local authorities and Government agencies under the 'Duty to Co-operate'.
- Statutory organisations including infrastructure providers and as legally required or where considered beneficial.
- Organisations representing local geographic, economic, environmental and social interests.
- Local businesses.
- Voluntary groups.

- Others who have expressed an interest in the Local Plan.
- The general public.
- Anyone who has asked to be notified of any changes.

4. How we will consult - methods of community involvement

Method	Audience	Reasons	Stage
Consultation documents available to view in public buildings	The whole community	To make formal proposals publicly available and allow formal comments to be received.	Each of the formal consultation stages required in the Local Plan Regulations.
Eden District Council website	The whole community	This will provide access to all relevant documents, and enable greater interactivity with the planning system. It will provide up-to-the-minute information. It will speed up the process.	This will provide up to date information for progress with all Local Plan documents and planning applications. It is available at all stages of the Local Plan process and for all planning applications.
E-consultation software	The whole community	This will increase community engagement opportunities and streamline consultation procedures. It will provide opportunities to consult with people at a time and place suitable to them. It will be easier to provide background information, promote more meaningful commentary and provide feedback to people on what has happened as a result of their input. It will support a more transparent and co-ordinated approach across the Council and the region. It will be easier to support multi-agency approaches, sharing information and avoiding duplication of effort and consultation fatigue. It will be easier for officers of the Council and communities to engage with consultations.	Each of the formal consultation stages required in the Regulations.

Method	Audience	Reasons	Stage
Media Releases (to local newspapers, radio and television)	The whole community	To improve awareness and understanding of the planning process and specific issues among the public. To publicise consultation documents. To feed back on decisions made.	As a minimum, at each of the formal consultation stages required in the Local Plan Regulations.
Letters/Emails (and documents) to statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders	Statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders	This is targeted towards organisations and individuals who can offer their professional expertise about the issue and/or who will be directly affected by the proposal.	Each of the formal consultation stages required in the Regulations. Consultation stage for planning applications.
Via www.haveyoursay.org.uk	The whole community	This is Cumbria's consultation and community engagement database.	Each of the formal consultation stages required in the Regulations.
Social media	The whole community	Updates will be made to the Council's Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/EdenDistrict Council and to its Twitter account: http://twitter.com/edencouncil	Each of the formal consultation stages required in the Regulations.
Council produced newsletters, leaflets and posters	The whole community Leaflets can also be used to target specific groups	A useful mechanism for informing and feeding back information to all residents of Eden. Posters will be put up on public notice boards, including supermarkets.	The All About Eden newsletter is produced twice a year. Leaflets and posters will be produced as required.
Public meetings and drop in events	General public and targeted groups	To raise awareness and gather views in a public arena.	Pre-production of Local Plan documents and also possibly during the production stage.
Meetings with local communities	Specific groups of people connected by a geographical area or area of interest.	To give information about the document/application and explain it in detail. To gather detailed feedback from a particular community to inform the development of documents and proposals.	Pre-production of Local plan documents and also possibly during the production stage.

Method	Audience	Reasons	Stage
Exhibitions and public displays	General public/local communities.	To present proposals, increase understanding and gain informal feedback.	Pre-production of Local Plan documents and also possibly during the production stage.
Existing networks within the district	Local organisations and communities.	To maximise the Council's resources when giving and receiving information.	At each stage throughout the process.
Meetings with key stakeholder groups	Specific stakeholders, which may include statutory consultees and other departments in the Council.	To gather targeted views, and identify and resolve potential issues early in the process.	Pre-production and production of Local Plan documents.

5. When we will consult

Preparation of the Local Plan is subject to rigorous rules. There are four stages for the Council to undertake in the preparation of each of these types of document. These are:

- Pre-production
- Production
- Examination
- Adoption

It will take approximately 2 years to complete the Local Plan, and there will be a number of consultations using a variety of methods, from those identified within the table above during this time.

Stage 1: Pre-production

This is the scoping stage, during which the Council considers who needs to be involved at the different stages in the planning process and how different sections of the community might be represented. This is also the stage during which the evidence base will be developed.

Stage 2: Production

All of the work during the pre-production stage will then be brought together to produce a preferred options Local Plan. Additional informal consultations and discussions may take place at this stage if required.

The 'preferred options' Local Plan will be made available to the public for formal comments during at least a six week consultation period. Notices of consultation will be placed on the Council's website www.eden.gov.uk giving details of the locations and times that the documents are available. We will also:

- Make copies of the document available for consideration in Eden District Council offices and libraries in the district.
- Update social media to publicise consultation opportunities.
- Consult all appropriate consultation bodies together with each of the relevant authorities to notify them that the documents are available together with a link to the document on the Council's website.

Any comments and representations that are received will be collated and made available to the public. The document will then be amended, taking account of the comments as appropriate to form the 'publication' version of the Local Plan.

Stage 3: Examination

The 'publication' version of the draft Local Plan will then be made available to the public for formal comments during at least a six week formal consultation period, before it is submitted to the Secretary of State. We will consult for at least a further 6 weeks at this stage and:

- Place on the Council's website www.eden.gov.uk a statement giving details of the locations and times that the Local Plan and comments are available for the public to view.
- Make copies of the Local plan and Sustainability Appraisal, together with the comments received, available for viewing in Eden District Council offices and libraries in the district.
- Place a copy of the documents on the Eden District Council website.
- Update social media to publicise the Examination.
- Notify all appropriate consultation bodies together with each of the relevant authorities to notify them that the Local Plan and comments have been submitted, together with a link to the document on the Council's website.
- Notify those persons who requested to be notified

The draft plan is then submitted to the Secretary of State is then considered for 'soundness' during an Independent Examination.

Stage 4: Adoption

Any changes that are recommended in the Inspector's report from the Examination will be made by the Council. Once the changes have been made, the final version of the Local Plan document will be adopted by Full Council.

Once the Council adopts the Local Plan it will be made publicly available, together with details of any saved plans it replaces:

- On the Council's website.
- For inspection at Council offices and libraries in the district.

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