

Appendix 1

Summary of Comments on the Statement of Community Involvement

Statement of Community Involvement - Summary of Comments	
Comment	Officer Response
Oxfordshire County Council - Support paragraph 5.7 about avoiding public holidays and summer vacations for consultation exercises.	Noted
OCC would like to be consulted on all SPDs.	Noted
Paragraph 6.5 lists County functions – can this be amended. The County Council is a statutory consultee on applications as Highway & Transport Authority and as minerals and waste planning authority. We wish to be consulted as a non-statutory consultee on development proposals for rights of way, developer funding, ecology/bio-diversity, and archaeology. Annex 1 sets out threshold sizes of applications the Council wishes to view.	Agreed (Note: para 6.5 has also been modified with the inclusion of 'Thames Valley Police' in response to the representations of the Thames Valley Police, see below) Recommendation: Para 6.5, second sentence, change to read “Statutory consultations will be carried out on many applications with bodies such as Oxfordshire County Council (highways and transport, minerals and waste) and the regional offices of English Heritage (important listed building/conservation area/ancient monument issues), Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency and Thames Valley Police. Then insert after second sentence a new sentence “Oxfordshire County Council is also a non-statutory consultee for rights of way, developer funding, ecology/bio-diversity and archaeology.”
The District Planning Consultations Team (renamed as the Strategic Planning Consultations), led by Linda Currie, still wish to be consulted on strategic applications.	Para 6.5 notes that consultations on applications will be carried out with Oxfordshire County Council. It is not necessary to include details of how the County Council wishes to be consulted. Recommendation: No change
The County Council is looking at moving to e-planning to deal with consultations. We will inform you when the system is finalised. We are participating in the trial of the Planning Portal's eConsultation Hub (along with West Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire). We encourage other districts in Oxfordshire to participate in the trial.	Noted
Paragraph 6.28 – regarding major proposals not involving planning applications, relating to Upper Thames Reservoir. We would like to be involved in any such application from an early stage.	Para 6.28 confirms that when an application for consent to construct the reservoir is submitted, the council will develop specific consultation arrangements. These would include major consultees like Oxfordshire County Council. To name all these consultees now in this para is unnecessary. Recommendation: No change
County Council would like to be consulted on and informed of adoption of all LDF documents, including SPDs, DPDs and other documents such as the LDS.	Oxfordshire County Council are / will be consulted on all LDF documents. Recommendation: No change
Consultations on LDF documents should be addressed to the Strategic Planning Consultations team and we will ensure the relevant teams have the opportunity to view the documents and feed into the Council's single, co-ordinated, corporate response.	Noted
We would like to be sent paper copies of LDF documents and the final adopted version .	Noted
British Waterways – Draws attention to 'Waterways	The SCI is a document which explains the council's

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and Development Plans' (2003), 'Waterways for Tomorrow' (DETR, 2000) and 'Planning a Future for Inland Waterways' (Inland Waterways Amenity advisory Council, 2001).	approach to community involvement on, for example, its LDF policy documents. This British Waterways information is not a matter for the SCI.
British Waterways South West does not own or manage any canals in the Vale but the old course of the Wilts and Berks Canal runs through the district. We encourage it's regeneration. Request suitable policies are included in any future LDF documents to promote regeneration and seek funding in the form of planning obligations or CIL. Canal route should be preserved and considered as green infrastructure.	See above comments. Policies relating to the canal will therefore be found in the Council's LDF documents. The council has indicated that the Core Strategy will promote the restoration of the Wilts & Berks canal and the Managing Development DPD will safeguard a route for the Wilts & Berks canal. Recommendation: No change
Mrs Sheila Bailey (Clerk Letcombe Bassett Parish Meeting) – paragraph 4.1, 'meaningful' is an important word. It has been our experience that our comments have little influence on the outcome. Design and location of new dwellings is decided on wishes of developer instead of considering impact on community.	In determining planning applications the council must assess the impact the development may have on the environment. The resulting decision can locally be unpopular if it is felt that the impact would not be so harmful as to justify refusing permission. Recommendation: No change
Faringdon Town Council – Information has been sent to Faringdon library which has limited opening hours and is not regarded as a centre for information from the Vale. While the town council has a copy, there is no representative of the Vale to answer queries. This underlines the problems caused by the closure of the Vale offices in Faringdon.	Consultation documents were placed in a number of public locations including Faringdon Town Council offices and Faringdon library with contact details of a named officer from the council who could be contacted for further information or on any queries.
The Coal Authority - Having reviewed the document, have no specific comments to make.	Noted.
Highways Agency – Pleased to see their comments made previously taken into account.	Noted.
SEEDA – No specific comments to make on the review of the SCI.	Noted.
St Helen Without Parish Council – Paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 – commitment to acknowledge in writing all comments received on planning applications is welcome. This does not happen currently, despite the same paragraph appearing in the 2006 SCI. Paragraph 6.24 – For major applications, pre-application consultation with local parish councils should be a requirement, not just encouraged.	It is intended that comments received will be sent a written acknowledgement. In the light of this representation this procedure will be checked. It cannot be a requirement that developers consult with parish councils at pre-application stage as this has no statutory basis. Recommendation: No change
Gerald Belcher – Difficult to imagine that a SCI will prevent planners from falling into the trap of allowing inappropriate development like the development at the old Renault site on Drayton Road, the development on the St Mary's school site in Wantage, and the Sainsbury's development in Wantage. Planners lack vision.	Noted
Thames Valley Police (represented by RPS) – paragraph 5.15: Support Council's commitment to consult relevant organisations on draft evidence base. However, there is no reference to Thames Valley Police in appendix 2 (list of bodies that will be consulted on local development documents).	Appendix 1 consultation bodies include 'the Police Authority'. However, for completeness this suggestion is agreed.. Recommendation: Add Thames Valley Police to list of bodies to consult in Appendix 2.

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PPS12 requires local authorities to undertake consultation with key stakeholders (including the police) on options for the Core Strategy and the evidence base. Early engagement is critical. The Police should be consulted in respect of design policy, crime reduction, community safety and police infrastructure requirements arising from new development.	Noted
Paragraph 5.19 - consulting on Development Plan Documents, bullet point 6 - should refer to Appendix 2 to clarify extent of consultation proposed.	Agreed Recommendation: Para 5.19, modify sixth bullet point to read “Send each of the specific consultation bodies (see appendix 2) invited to make representations on the plan a copy of the proposed submission documents and a statement of the representations procedure Regulation 27 ”
Paragraph 6.2 - Police should be recognised explicitly as a valuable advisor on planning applications in respect of Secured by Design issues and infrastructure requirements.	Para 6.2 is a general brief description of the process. Later para 6.5 explains that the council will seek to involve other organisations in the planning application process and lists a number of bodies to which the Thames Valley Police could be added. Note: this modification has been incorporated into the response to Oxfordshire County Council, see above, which also makes changes to this sentence. Recommendation: Para 6.5, at end of amended second sentence add “and the Thames Valley Police.”
Alan Boyce (Longworth Parish Clerk) – The SCI still allows plans to be changed ‘by the back door’. Twice on pages 23 and 24 the phrase ‘amended significantly’ is used. It is up to the consulted to decide if change is significant. All resubmitted plans should be re-circulated.	It is not efficient or necessary to re-consult on all changes, many of which are minor and uncontroversial. Recommendation: No change
FFT Planning – Gypsies and travellers are rarely effectively consulted on their needs. It is important that they are closely involved in informing the planning process, in particular what sorts of sites they will need in the future, where they should be and how many.	The SCI explains the council’s approach to community involvement and at para 4.2, second bullet point, recognises it needs to engage with ‘hard to reach’ groups. Para 5.7, first bullet point, advises that these hard to reach groups can be found in appendix 2. However, it will be helpful if this bullet point also included examples of who would be consulted to keep hard to reach groups informed. The council also has an Equality and Diversity Scheme which should be referred to for completeness. Recommendations: a) Para 5.7, first bullet point, amend last sentence to read “ For example, Gypsies and Travellers will be involved in the first instance by contact with Oxfordshire County Council’s Gypsy and Traveller Service, the Traveller Education Service and FFT Planning. These and other ‘hard to reach’ groups and contacts are listed in appendix 2. Regard will also be had to the council’s Inclusive Consultation guidelines.” b) Para 9.4, add a fourth bullet point “Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008 – 11”

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Local authorities need to be proactive. Heavy reliance on paper documentation may be counterproductive due to the common literacy problems within this group. Better to initiate and sustain contact on Gypsies own territory. Use existing links such as Traveller Education Service. Informal meetings in familiar surroundings is the most appropriate approach. Arrange focus groups, private workshops and one-to-one meetings at convenient times. Early and sustained engagement is key. This should be reflected in the SCI.	The council is cooperating fully in the ongoing regional assessment of how many pitches the gypsy and traveller communities will need. As outlined above, proposals for gypsy and traveller accommodation will be covered by the council's LDF documents. The SCI specifically lists in appendix 2 FFT Planning as an organisation that will be consulted as well as the Gypsy Council and the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition and the Traveller Education Service can be added to this list. Recommendation: Appendix 2, General Interest Groups, add 'Traveller Education Service' and 'Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Gypsy and Traveller Service'.
Concerned over lack of race equality impact assessments. CLG has made it clear that race equality should be at the heart of the planning process. Report 'Common Ground: equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers' (CRE, 2006) recommends Gypsies and Travellers are referred to in SCI and that local authorities should take practical steps to involve them.	The council has carried out Equality Impact Assessments for both the Development Control and Development Policy service areas. Also, as noted above, the council will include additional consultation bodies and have regard to its Equality and Diversity Scheme to ensure that the interests of the Gypsies and Travellers are properly considered.
Chapter 4 should be modified to identify Gypsies and Travellers as a hard to reach group and outline measures which will be taken to ensure that consultation with them is effective.	The identification of Gypsies and Travellers as a hard to reach group has already been addressed in the responses above. Recommendation: No change
Dr P A Cawse – Title should include mention of the role that statutory and non-statutory organisations play in adding expertise that is available to the community, e.g. 'Involvement of the Community and External Organisations in Planning Applications'. The title thus agrees with para 6.24 on page 28.	The title 'Statement of Community Involvement' is that which is used in the relevant Act which requires its preparation by a local planning authority and in the subsequent government advice on what the SCI should do. A unilateral change of title is likely to be confusing to the public. Recommendation: No change
Para 6.24 and 6.25 - The issue of 'reserved matters' appears to be omitted, i.e. matters reserved at time of initial decision for further consideration at a later date. The community may think these matters have been resolved when they are not. Some are easily resolved, others more complex. If this procedure is avoided it will give rise to some resentment in the community.	Applications for reserved matters are handled in the same manner as all planning applications, with the same consultations carried out. However, for completeness, para 6.1 should be modified to clarify that planning applications include reserved matters. Note: para 6.1 is also proposed to be modified in response to the comments of Persimmon Homes Wessex. Recommendation: Para 6.1, first sentence, amend to read " An important part of the council's planning service is to consult with the community to find out what people think about planning applications, including applications for reserved matters"
If major development is delayed for economic reasons and is overtaken by other local projects, issues of strategic planning will require re-assessment and possible revision, with an up to date EIA to include the reserved matters. Explanation is needed of the way in which those reserved matters of major importance to sustainability and impact of local environment are agreed with developers, reported to the community and agreed in the presence of consultations and representatives from the community.	See above response. Subsequent reserved matters applications with a revised EIA will be consulted on in the same way as all planning applications. Recommendation: No change

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Use of the reserved matters system may explain why only 27% of Vale residents felt they could influence planning decisions and 33% in SODC (Oxford Times, 25.6.09).	There is no adverse use of "the reserved matters system". See also above response. Recommendation: No change
Robert Fyfe: page 23, paragraph 6.3, 21 days is insufficient time to comment on planning applications. 5-6 weeks would be better.	The government has set planning authorities time targets for the determination of applications. The period of 21 days has been set to reconcile the time allowed for the public to respond with the government's time target for determining applications. Recommendation: No change
Page 26, paragraph 6.17, it would be helpful to anyone wishing to speak about an application at Development Control Committee meetings if they could be sent a copy of the relevant planning officers report in advance.	Committee reports are available to view on the web site at least seven days before the date of the meeting. Recommendation: No change
Page 26, paragraph 6.18, speakers are allowed 3 minutes with no questions permitted. 3 minutes is insufficient and committee members should have the opportunity to ask questions of a speaker to clarify any new information.	Three minutes is considered sufficient to enable statements to be made. In the interest of the efficient running of the meetings it is not felt that any longer should be given to make statements or that speakers should be asked questions. Recommendation: No change
Page 28, paragraph 6.23, applicants should be encouraged to consult their parish/town council before submitting a formal application, in all cases, not just major ones.	Parish councils are lay organisations which rely on the goodwill of their members. To require a parish council to comment on all applications before submission is likely to impose an unreasonable burden on those parish councillors involved. Recommendation: No change
The Theatres Trust: Support the inclusion of contact details on page 6 for prospective consultees. Thank you for including The Theatres Trust on page 42 as a general interest group. We look forward to being contacted on future planning policy consultations, particularly the Core Strategy and any town centre area action plans.	Noted
Oxfordshire Geology Trust: Appendix 2, page 43 – under general interest groups, 'Oxfordshire RIGS group' should now read 'Oxfordshire Geology Trust'.	Noted Recommendation: Appendix 2, 'Environmental Interest Groups', delete 'Oxfordshire RIGS group' and insert 'Oxfordshire Geology Trust'
Persimmon Homes Wessex: paragraph 1.4, emphasis on planning system is wrong here. Should refer to plan led system and greater community involvement in planning process.	Para 1.4 refers to " <i>one</i> of the key objectives of the development plan system is greater community involvement" (my emphasis). Government advice on spatial planning emphasises the importance of community responsive policy making at the heart of the planning system (PPS12, para 1.5). There is no need to change para 1.4. Recommendation: No change
Paragraph 3.5, is the consultee database on the website? Should be clearly available.	The consultee database should be on the Council's web-site. Recommendation: As soon as is practicable, the LDF consultee database will be placed on the council's web-site.
Paragraph 4.1, Support reference to vision of the community but definition of community should be brought forward to here from paragraph 5.1. Support inclusion of developers in this definition but there are	The nature of a vision is that it is usually at a high level and succinct. It would not usually be appropriate to blunt the force of the vision with too much detail. Later para 5.4 notes that the council will

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others who are not included who will need to be consulted. E.g. County, regional and national, statutory bodies, plus other interested parties.	use a range of techniques to keep the community informed and these will include contacting those on the council's database. This database includes county, regional and national, statutory bodies, plus other interested parties. Recommendation: No change
Paragraph 5.4, support various techniques to involve community. The Council's website is particularly important - should provide an up to date schedule of expected consultation exercises which are easily accessible.	Noted. The council has already used its web-site to help publicise and consult on its core strategy documents.
Paragraph 5.9 – Support Council taking a flexible approach to consultation. Find standard forms or specific questions particularly unhelpful. We would rather respond in a letter.	Noted
Paragraph 5.11 – Support Council making comments available on the website. Proper notification of these should be given, either by a link on the home page or the planning home page.	Noted
Paragraph 5.18 – This statement is wrong because the SCI will not be submitted to the Secretary of State (figure 2 and para 5.20). Should therefore state that Local Development Scheme is also wrong.	Following the changes to procedure in the revised PPS12, the SCI will not be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.. The SCI should be amended accordingly. Recommendation: Para 5.18, third sentence, amend to read “The SCI is subject to a similar process.” Para 5.20, delete second sentence.
Paragraph 5. 38 – Bullet point 1 states that the Council will consult 'relevant' bodies, suggests Council will be selective in who it sends documents to. In order to be sound, Council should set out criteria for selecting these bodies. Bullet point 2 is unclear of how the range of 6-8 weeks for consultation will be applied to different documents. For consistency, all documents should have a 6 week consultation period.	As alluded to in para 5.38, consultation must be carried out so that it meets the government's requirements which are set out in the relevant regulations. The 2004 Regulations (as amended) describe the various bodies with whom a council must consult. The council cannot be selective in this process. These bodies are therefore 'relevant' to the council's consultations. Recommendation: No change The regulations (as amended) allow discretion on the length of the consultation period. However, any consultation that takes place will be explicit and clear about the length of the consultation period. Recommendation: No change
Paragraph 5.40 – Indicates Council will be making a judgement on how it will use various methods of consultation using words like 'where the Council considers it will add value to the consultation process'. Document should set out the criteria the Council will use to make those considerations.	Para 5.40 sets out some of the additional methods of consultation that the council may use, depending on circumstances relating to the scope and scale of the proposal. To set out what the likely criteria might be for each method would make the document even longer. Recommendation: No change
Paragraph 6.3 – Bullet point 9 should note that the decision notice will also appear on the website.	Agreed. Recommendation: Para 6.3, bullet point nine, last sentence, amend to read “A copy of the decision notice will be placed on the council's web-site and also sent to the relevant town/parish council or parish meeting.”
Paragraph 6.6 – For simplicity, paragraph 6.19 and 6.20 should be combined with paragraph 6.6 to explain how the Council uses the web to manage the	To try to make the document easier to read, the issue of electronic accessibility is briefly introduced in para 6.6 with more detail following in the later

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development control process.	paras. Recommendation: No change
Paragraph 6.7 – Suggest Agents Forum could be extended to include representatives of local and national developers.	The Agents Forum does include local developers. It would take away its local purpose if national developers were included. Recommendation: No change
Paragraph 6.24 – We are happy to carry out wider consultation, as set out in this paragraph. Where this has been done in the past it has been helpful for the relevant council to attend developers consultation events. Recognition of the importance of Council involvement in developers consultation events should be included in this paragraph.	There is a concern that if the council appeared at a developer's consultation event it might be interpreted as the council implicitly endorsing the developer's proposals and having made its decision before the council's committee. Recommendation: No change
6.25 – Particularly support development team approach and the use of Planning Performance Agreements and Planning Protocols to set out appropriate framework for dealing with planning applications. Paragraph 5.7 encourages use of Planning Aid. Reference could also be made in the development control section to the Planning Advice Service (PAS) and Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS).	Noted Planning Aid provides advice to those making applications. The Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS) provides an independent advisory service to local planning authorities. In that regard, ATLAS has a different role to Planning Aid in that it plays no part in the preparation, submission or consultation on applications and will only be called in once the council has begun to consider the submitted application. Recommendation: No change
An additional section is required in the SCI referring to other types of applications such as listed building consent, demolition of buildings in conservation areas, advertisements and tree work.	It is intended these different types of applications are covered by the general reference in para 6.1 to planning applications. However, a reference to other planning related applications would address this point. Note: para 6.1 has already been proposed to be modified in response to the comments of Dr Cawse above. Recommendation: Para 6.1, modify amended para 6.1 to read, "An important part of the council's planning service is to consult with the community to find out what people think about planning applications, including applications for reserved matters and other planning related applications"
General: The full implications of the council's service review are currently being considered. This may require a reassessment of how certain aspects of the service are carried out.	The implications of the service review need to be reflected in the approach being taken to how the document is kept up to date. Recommendation: a) Para 3.5, first sentence, amend to read "The database will be kept under review and made available on the council's web site as soon as is practicable." b) Para 7.2, first sentence, amend to read "The Statement of Community Involvement will be kept under review and the council will make all necessary revisions." c) Para 8.2, delete second sentence.
General: The appendices contain some bodies that no longer exist and do not include others that should be listed.	Agreed. Recommendations: a) Appendix 1, delete references to 'Disability Rights Commission' and Equal Opportunities Commission'. b) Appendix 2, delete reference to 'Commission

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	<p>for Racial Equality'</p> <p>c) Appendix 2, in 'Local Community Agency/Groups' list, add 'Ethnic Minority and Black Race Committee for Enterprise' (EMBRACE), 'Homophobia Awareness Liaison Team' (HALT), 'Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Gypsy and Traveller Service' and 'Vale Disability Action Group'.</p>
End	