

For the:

- **Mid Sussex District Plan (Regulation 19)**
- **Sustainability Appraisal**
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment**
- **Equality Impacts Assessment**

1. Background

The District Council is revising the 2018 District Plan to guide development and the provision of infrastructure over the period to 2039. The submission draft District Plan provides a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve over this time and a delivery strategy for how this will be achieved.

Community involvement plays a vital role in the preparation of District Plans. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, there are two formal consultation periods for District Plans:

- Regulation 18: Preparation of a Local Plan
- Regulation 19: Publication of a Local Plan (Pre-Submission)

Consultation was held on a Regulation 18 draft District Plan in November/December 2022. This Community Involvement Plan relates to the Regulation 19 consultation. At this stage of the plan-making process, the Council will have published a version of the Plan that it believes meets legal and soundness requirements and is capable of Submission to the Secretary of State for examination. It is a requirement by the Planning Inspectorate that responses are focussed on legal and soundness matters. An example form for use at Regulation 19 stage prepared by the Planning Inspectorate can be found in Appendix 1. The responses are collated by the District Council and submitted in full to the independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the District Plan.

2. Role and Purpose of the Community Involvement Plan

Mid Sussex District Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in March 2019.

The SCI contains 6 General Principles for Community Engagement:

- 1) **Be Timely:** Involve the community as early as possible in decision making
- 2) **Be Inclusive:** Accessible to all those who wish to take part
- 3) **Be Transparent:** Consultation material should be clear and plain-English
- 4) **Be Respectful of Other's Views:** The Council will listen to all views
- 5) **Be Efficient:** Consultation to be proportionate and use resources wisely
- 6) **Be Clear About the Results:** Decisions and results should be made clear

The SCI recognises that there is no “one size fits all” approach to consultation; recognising that each decision that requires community involvement may be for different audiences or different

purposes. The SCI therefore requires that a bespoke Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is prepared for each consultation on Planning Policy documents (such as the District Plan) so that consultation can be tailored.

This Community Involvement Plan follows the template set out in the SCI. It sets out:

- Who is involved in the production and consultation of the submission draft District Plan;
- Why people are being involved in the process;
- When and how people will be able to get involved and influence the submission draft District Plan; and
- How the results of community involvement will be used.

The submission draft District Plan is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impacts Assessment, all of which are also subject to consultation at Regulation 19 stage and therefore the same consultation arrangements set out in this CIP.

3. Who is to be involved?

Early engagement

In the SCI, the Council commits to 'front load' consultation activity, to identify potential issues and options. This work has assisted in the formulation of policies and has informed and updated the evidence base. Early engagement with stakeholders has been sought from the start of the process of producing the submission draft District Plan, including:

- District Councillors and Town and Parish Councils have been briefed on the need for a District plan and anticipated content.
- A Developers Liaison Group, which includes representatives from across the development industry, was consulted on the methodology for site selection and has been kept informed of the progress in plan making.
- Neighbouring Local Authorities and County Authorities, on a group and individual basis. Input was sought to the methodology for the site selection, the outcome of the Site Selection process, the content of the draft District Plan at Regulation 18 stage, representations received during the Regulation 18 consultation and strategic cross-boundary matters emerging as a result of the Regulation 19 plan;
- Infrastructure providers such as water companies, utility suppliers, the highways authority, education authority.
- External organisations, such as the High Weald AONB Unit and the National Park.
- Other statutory consultees, such as Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Including everyone

The Equality Impacts Assessment (EqIA) that accompanies the District Plan considers the needs of people classified as having 'protected characteristics'.¹ This assessment concludes that there are no additional specific measures or actions needed at this time. However, the Council will continue to promote consultation exercises that are inclusive of all, including engagement with representative organisations and monitoring of the consultation.

¹ As defined by the *Equality Act 2010*

There is further analysis of consultation practices and the actions that will be taken to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with the consultation included within the EqIA which accompanies the submission draft District Plan.²

Who will be contacted?

A number of groups will be directly contacted and asked for their comments. These are:

- District Councillors;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- ‘Specific consultation bodies’/ ‘general consultation bodies’ (statutory consultees) as set out in legislation.³ These include West Sussex County Council, adjoining local planning authorities, service providers and government agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, and the South Downs National Park Authority;
- Other organisations, groups or individuals that may have an interest in the submission draft District Plan. These include members of the public, the Mid Sussex Partnership, voluntary services’ associations, residents’ associations, housing associations, business groups and associations, environmental, countryside and conservation groups, youth and elderly persons’ groups and the development industry;
- Representatives of those groups highlighted as requiring targeted consultation by the EqIA;
- Subscribers to the Planning Policy e-mail alerts service which includes members of the public as well as organisations⁴;
- Those that made representations at Regulation 18 stage; and
- Internal consultees at the District Council.

Elected District Councillors have a key role to play in forming the submission draft District Plan and will be fully involved in the process through:

- The Scrutiny Committee for Place and Environment (any District Councillor can attend and request to speak);
- Full Council (consists of all District Councillors);
- Briefings;
- Meetings with Ward Councillor directly impacted and
- Councillors will be directly informed and can respond during the public consultation period.

The Council has committed to ongoing engagement with Town and Parish Councils and this too involves group and individual briefings and workshops. In addition Town and Parish Councils are a ‘Specific Consultation Body’ and are therefore invited to respond to formal consultations.

4. Why are people being involved?

We are asking for comments on the submission draft District Plan through a formal consultation period. It is important to seek input from the wider public, as the Plan will set the strategy and allocate sites for development in the district. It also includes planning policies that will have an impact on both the existing and future communities of Mid Sussex.

² Available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/district-plan-review/>

³ *The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)*

⁴ To receive news and updates on policy documents being prepared please sign up to our email alerts at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/consultation-monitoring/#topic-planning-policy-email-alerts>

The Regulation 18 draft District Plan was published in November 2022. At that stage stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on what the plan ought to contain. All comments made at that stage were considered by the Council and informed the content of the next version of the Plan, which is the Regulation 19 submission draft District Plan. At this stage there is limited scope to influence the content of the Plan, and responses at this stage must focus on whether the Plan meets legal and soundness tests set out in National Planning Policy.

To meet the legal and soundness tests the plan needs to be positively prepared, justified, effective, consistent with national policy as well as meeting specific legal requirements. It will be for an independent Planning Inspector to determine if the legal and soundness tests have been met.

The Regulation 19 submission draft District Plan is the version of the Plan that the Council believes meets legal requirements and is ‘sound’ in accordance with the Tests of Soundness set out in National Planning Policy Framework. A model response form has been prepared by the Planning Inspectorate to assist – an example is provided at Appendix 1. All responses received at this stage will be submitted to the independent Inspector who will examine the Plan.

To ensure the consultation is meaningful, it is important to understand the context within which the submission draft District Plan has been drafted. The Plan has been informed by Government policy and guidance along with an extensive evidence base. The draft District Plan has been written in line with Government planning policy and guidance, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and Planning Practice Guidance.

- The submission draft District Plan has been written in accordance with legislation and regulations.⁵
- The submission draft District Plan has been informed by the results of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. This shows which options have been considered for its strategy and policies and why the options chosen are preferred over those rejected.
- The submission draft District Plan has been informed by background evidence. The background evidence will be made available to view on the Council’s website.⁶

5. When will people be involved?

Proposed Submission draft (Regulation 19)	Following agreement by Council, the Council will publish the Proposed Submission District Plan for a six-week period in January 2024. During this time the public can make further representations on the submission draft District Plan and these will be considered by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out the Examination in Public. The Council may make minor changes to the District Plan following publication.
Main Modifications	Should the independent Planning Inspector conclude that Main Modifications are required in order for the Plan to be found ‘sound’, these will be subject to a further consultation. If this is the case, a Community Involvement Plan will be published at that stage identifying how people can be involved.
Adoption	Assuming the Inspector concludes that it is sound (or can be made so if Main Modifications are accepted) the new District Plan is due to

⁵ *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, and other relevant legislation.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/district-plan-review/>

	be adopted in 2024. No consultation is required at this stage although it will be widely advertised.
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Further details of the timetable are available within the Council's Local Development Scheme: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/consultation-monitoring/>

6. How will people be involved?

The consultation will be open to all and we will seek to inform and receive comment from the widest possible range of people. We will:

- Issue a press release, and utilise social media;
- Put all the details and documentation on the Council's website including an on-line response form.
- Send letters or emails to all the 'specific consultation bodies' (statutory consultees) and to all the other organisations listed in Section 2 above;
- Send letters or emails to all those who have signed up to the Planning Policy alert;
- Send letters or emails to all those who made a representation at Regulation 18 stage;
- Organise a briefing for District, Town and Parish Councils to disseminate information – individual briefings will be held where requested;
- Organise public exhibitions in accessible locations on request.
- All on-line material will be compatible with 'BrowseAloud' for people who find it difficult to read on-line;
- Provide an interactive version of the submission draft District Plan with accompanying interactive Policies Map to improve accessibility;
- Utilise electronic methods wherever possible in addition to traditional methods to make it as easy as possible to advertise and respond to the consultation;
- A translation service is available to those for whom English is a second language;

Availability of Documents

Regulation 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the requirements for documents to be made available for inspection.

35.—(1) A document is to be taken to be made available by a local planning authority when—

(a) made available for inspection, at their principal office and at such other places within their area as the local planning authority consider appropriate, during normal office hours, and

(b) published on the local planning authority's website,

In terms of criterion (a), the District Plan consultation documents will be available to view at the Mid Sussex District Council offices (Oaklands, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1SS) during normal office hours.

In terms of "other such places" set out in criterion (a), the Council will send hard copies of the District Plan consultation material to each of the libraries and help points within the district and provide instructions for accessing the documentation on the Council website (which could be accessed using library PCs for example). Hard copies will also be sent to Town and Parish Councils to make available for the public to view.

The submission draft District Plan, supporting documentation and evidence base will be available to view on the Council's website at <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/district-plan-review/>

Submitting Responses

Comments must be submitted in writing (physical or digital) and cannot be accepted as anonymous. All information received is public information, subject to relevant data protection legislation.⁷

Comments can be submitted via the interactive consultation portal, by email or by post. Electronic submissions are encouraged to facilitate ease of processing. A response form, following the Planning Inspectorate's defined template for Regulation 19 stage, will be made available. Where hard copy responses must be submitted these can be sent to:

Planning Policy, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS

E-mail to: policyconsultation@midsussex.gov.uk

7. What happens to the results?

The Council is required to summarise the main issues raised and publish a consultation statement that sets out:

- Who was invited to make representations to the District Plan Consultation Draft, how this was done, a summary of the main issues raised and how they were taken into account
- Who was invited to make representations to the submission draft District Plan, how this was done, how many representations were received and a summary of the main issues raised.

All comments will be considered by the Planning Inspector appointed to carry out the examination. The Inspector may decide that some matters are of sufficient importance that they will be considered at the Examination hearing sessions. It will be for the Inspector to decide which matters are dealt with in the way and which parties will be invited to attend.

Notification that the submission draft District Plan has been submitted will be sent to all statutory consultees, Planning Policy email alert subscribers and respondents who submitted a response and expressed a wish to be notified of the next stages of the District Plan.

If you have any comments or queries on this Community Involvement Plan, please contact the Planning Policy team on PlanningPolicy@midsussex.gov.uk or 01444 477053.

If you have a comment or concerns with your experience of a Council-led community involvement exercise, you should in the first instance contact the team using the details above.

CIP - Appendix 1

Model Representation Form for Local Plans (from [Model representation form for Local Plans - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684812/Model_representation_form_for_Local_Plans_-_GOV.UK.pdf))

⁷Such as the *Data Protection Act (2018)*

LPA Logo	Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form	Ref: (For official use only)
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Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:

Please return to [name of LPA] BY [time/ date/year]

NB - LPA to include data protection / privacy notice, see para 4 of Explanatory Note

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if applicable) boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title

First Name

Last Name

Job Title

(where relevant)

Organisation

(where relevant)

Address Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

Post Code

Telephone Number

E-mail Address
(where relevant)

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph Policy Policies Map

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

4.(1) Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.(2) Sound	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tick as appropriate

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.