



Local Development Framework
London Borough of Merton

Your say in *Planning Merton*



Merton's Statement of Community Involvement

July 2006



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FOREWARD

BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND REGENERATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

The new development plan system

- 1.1 All local planning authorities must draw up a development plan for their area, containing the policies and proposals that will shape what is built over the next ten to fifteen years.
- 1.2 The new style development plan for Merton will consist of The London Plan and Merton's Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will not be a single document like the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) but rather a folder of documents (see Glossary).
- 1.3 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is part of the LDF, and sets out Merton Council's commitment to community involvement in planning.
- 1.4 It explains how Merton's communities can let the Council know what they think about new planning policies and guidance, and on planning applications. It also shows how different LDF documents will be prepared and how people can expect to hear about them. It describes different types of planning application and how people can make their opinions heard on each type.



Picture from set drawn by Merton children, Merton Children Information Services Fun Day 2004

2. PREPARING THE SCI

Purpose of the SCI

2.1 The SCI sets out:

- How Merton Council will involve Merton's residents, workers and communities at each stage of preparing the LDF documents.
- Good practice in engaging those with an interest in development
- Guidelines on how the community will be consulted on planning applications
- Guidance for applicants for planning permission about what is expected of them

Timetable and consultation stages

2.2 The broad timetable for the preparation and consultation on Merton's SCI is as follows:

Winter 2004 Gathering evidence; front loading consultation

Spring 2005 Assess results of front loading and prepare draft SCI

Summer 2005 Consult on Draft SCI – 6 weeks
Consider consultation results in preparation of the SCI

Autumn 2005 to 2006 Submit SCI for formal consultation and examination
12-month period for the following actions as agreed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS)
Consultation following submission – 6 weeks
Inspector's Report
Adoption and approval of SCI

Preparing Merton's SCI

2.3 Preparing the SCI consisted of the following stages:

2.4 Front loading Stage: The new planning system encourages community involvement as early as possible in preparing development plans and planning applications. This is referred to as 'front loading'. Becoming involved at the early stages will mean that people will have a greater potential to make a difference to what is built in their local area.

2.5 At this stage, Merton Council carried out a broad consultation across the borough to find out who wanted to hear more about planning and the LDF and to find out how people preferred to hear from the Council,

for example by letter, in the local paper, in focus groups etc. This information was used to create an LDF Consultation Database and to prepare the draft SCI

- 2.6 Production and Consultation Stage: A draft SCI was prepared using the comments received at the front loading stage. Merton's residents, workers and communities had six weeks to comment on the draft SCI
- 2.7 The Examination Stage: After making the required changes to the Draft SCI as a result of the consultation, it is submitted to the Secretary of State for an independent examination. As part of the examination, another six-week public consultation is carried out on the SCI. The Inspector will consider everybody's comments on the SCI and will measure the SCI against the tests of soundness set out in government guidance (see Appendix 2). After the examination the Inspector will produce a binding report recommending any changes to the SCI.
- 2.8 Adoption: After the Inspector's report has been published, the SCI will be adopted by Merton Council. From then on the Council will need to ensure that all LDF documents are prepared and planning applications considered in accordance with the SCI.

Who pays for these consultations?

- 2.9 Existing Council staff resources and budgets, including the use of Planning Delivery Grant, will be used to support community involvement in planning.

Planning Policy Team

- 2.10 The Planning Policy Team, which consists of five members of staff, will lead on community involvement in the LDF. Three members of the Planning Research Team will support this Team. Additional staff resources will be coordinated through the LDF Steering Group.

Community Engagement Officer

- 2.11 The Community Engagement Officer in the Planning Policy Team is the main contact for anyone who wants to be involved in planning policy preparation. They will also help make sure that Merton Council is using the right methods to involve the local communities and that the SCI is reviewed if changes are needed.

It is easy to forget that the biggest commitment of resources is by consultees-not consultants (Quote from Tuesday Topics; www.Consultationinstitute.org)

Development Control Section

- 2.12 The Development Control Section manages community involvement on planning applications. 12 members of this Section, including planning officers, administrative officers and managers, help do this.

'Hard to reach' groups

- 2.13 Merton Council wants to make sure that everybody has a chance to help shape their local area. It will try to involve people and organisations that have not traditionally responded to consultations on planning.
- 2.14 As well as listening to what people say, where possible Merton Council will monitor respondents by geographic area, age, ethnic origin, gender, organisation and other appropriate characteristics. This is to make sure that the SCI is working effectively and that the consultation methods being used are attracting responses from across Merton's diverse communities, not favouring one group over another.
- 2.15 Consultants may be appointed to help with community involvement where the Council considers it necessary. They may help to organise focus groups or help attract 'hard to reach' groups.

Co-ordination of consultations

- 2.16 The Council wants to reduce consultation fatigue and to use resources efficiently. Where possible, the Council will try to combine LDF community involvement exercises with other Council initiatives such as the Community Plan, and also with the Council's partners where possible.
- 2.17 Merton Council is setting up a corporate consultation database detailing all the main consultation projects within the Council for the next few months. This will help co-ordinate consultations where possible and ensure that the same group of residents or users are not surveyed repeatedly within a short period of time.

Resource constraints

- 2.18 Community involvement work requires a lot of resources, both staff time and financial commitment. The Council will need to carefully consider how to make effective and efficient use of existing resources to carry out this work and to ensure that resources are not overstretched. This needs to be balanced with the Council's legal requirements to undertake other tasks concerning preparation of the LDF (See Table in Chapter 4 for estimate of costs).

Overseeing the community involvement process

2.19 The Head of Regeneration and the Head of Planning and Public Protection will jointly oversee the process of community involvement for the LDF. Before Merton's communities are consulted on the SCI or any DPDs, the documents are looked at and commented on through Merton's democratic scrutiny process.

Review of SCI

2.20 In accordance with government guidance, the Council will revise the SCI where significant changes have occurred concerning the types of groups the Council wishes to engage with or when the Council wishes to significantly change its techniques for community engagement. During the review the SCI may be revised to reflect emerging best practice in community engagement and involvement. The success and effectiveness of the SCI will be reviewed through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

2.21 As well as considering people's responses on planning matters, Merton Council will also be looking to find out what people thought of the different consultation techniques being used, if they thought they could be improved and how this could be done. This information will feed into any review of the SCI.

2.22 The effectiveness of the response shall be measured not only by the quantity of responses, but also quality. The responses shall be measured in terms of age, gender, address, ethnic background and any other criteria.

2.23 Contact details: Diagram 1

<p>Community Engagement Officer Policy and Information Team Environment and Regeneration London Borough of Merton Merton Civic Centre London Road, Morden SM4 5DX</p> <p>Tel: 0208 545 4847 Fax :0208 545 3326 E-Mail: policyandinformationteam@merton.gov.uk</p>	<p>Development Control Team Environment and Regeneration London Borough of Merton Merton Civic Centre London Road, Morden SM4 5DX</p> <p>Tel 0208 545 3777 (North Team) or E-mail: Planning.North@merton.gov.uk (Covering Wimbledon)</p> <p>And 0208 545 3984 (South Team) or E-mail: Planning.South@merton.gov.uk (Covering Morden, Mitcham, Raynes Park, and Colliers Wood)</p>
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Ward of Lavender is ranked in the top 20% wards nationally for multiple deprivation and three are in the top 25% nationally – Cricket Green, Pollard Hill and Ravensbury. (Community Plan 2005-2015)

3. MERTON'S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

3.1 The SCI seeks to achieve a greater level of community ownership and involvement in the planning process. To help Merton Council get the views and opinions of the local communities, it has prepared a number of key strategies and policies concerning community involvement and engagement. These were all taken into consideration when preparing Merton's SCI:

- Merton's Consultation Strategy 2002 (See Appendix 5)
- Draft Merton's Community Plan 2005-2015 (See Appendix 6)
- Draft Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy (See Appendix 7)

Linkages between Merton's SCI and LDF with the Community Plan and other relevant Council strategies

3.2 The Community Plan aims to improve the quality of life and services in Merton over the next 10 years (to 2015). One of the ways that the ideas in the Community Plan will be carried out is through the LDF. As such, the LDF will share some of the spatial planning and land use objectives with the Community Plan

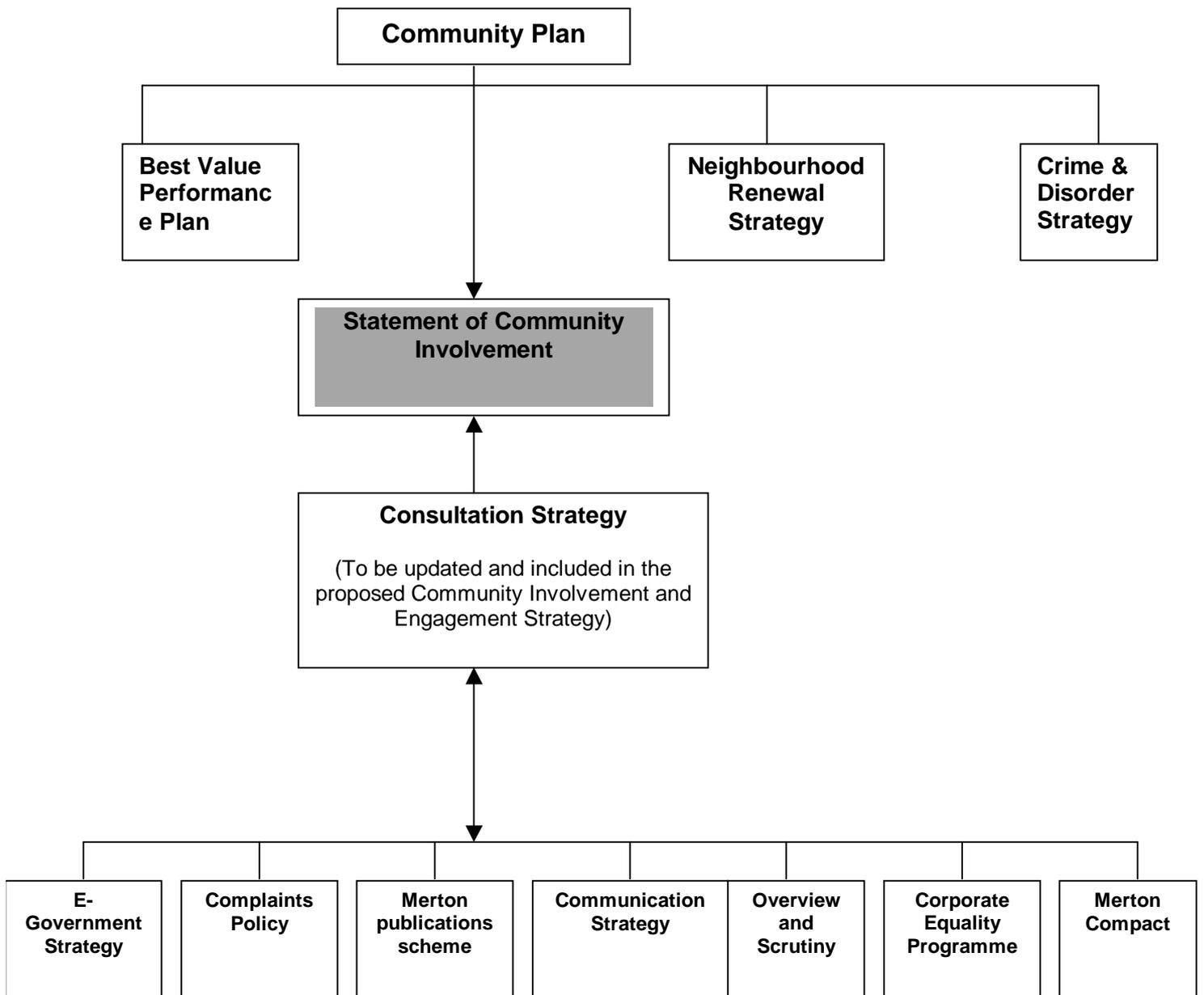
3.3 To ensure efficient use of resources, consultations between the LDF, Community Plan and other Council strategies will be co-ordinated wherever possible. The Council has also established a corporate consultation database detailing all main consultations scheduled for the next few months. Corporate Research & Community Engagement Officer maintains this database.

3.4 Where anybody has commented on land use and spatial planning issues as part of the Community Plan, these comments will be fed into the LDF

3.5 Officers involved in preparing the Community Plan will also be part of teams to help prepare different parts of the LDF

3.6 Diagram 2 sets out Merton's strategies and policies for community involvement and engagement and the relationships between them.

DIAGRAM 2: STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN MERTON



4. HOW DO WE CONSULT?

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- 4.1 Different people like to be contacted in different ways. Some prefer letters, e-mail or the Internet; others would rather attend a meeting or see an exhibition. The Council uses different methods to inform local communities, depending on what's being discussed, and people can contact the Council with their views in several different ways
- 4.2 The following table sets out the different ways Merton Council can involve the local communities. The Council will use these methods to involve the community in preparing Merton's Local Development Framework and in considering planning applications.



Space Syntax 2005

“The outcomes from planning affect everyone and everyone must therefore have the opportunity to play a role in delivering effective and inclusive planning.” - Planning Policy Statement 1

CONSULTATION METHOD	BENEFITS	WEAKNESSES	COST	WHEN TO BE USED
Merton Council magazine				
Dedicated article or combined with another topic (e.g. Community Plan) in <i>MyMerton</i> , a magazine produced every two months for distribution to all households in the borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough-wide distribution • Can inform people who otherwise might not be aware of or interested in planning matters • Can monitor content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to editorial agreement • Dates do not always overlap with consultation stages • Long lead-in time for production 	No additional costs	DPD: issues and options; preferred options consultation (subject to editorial agreement and dates overlapping with consultation stages)
Press release to local papers				
Press release prepared by Merton Council and sent to all local papers (Mitcham and Morden Guardian; Wimbledon Guardian) and trade press if appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough-wide distribution • Can inform people who otherwise might not be aware of or interested in planning matters • More frequent publication and higher readership than MyMerton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to editorial agreement and interest, cannot guarantee that the press release will be used 	No additional costs	DPD issues and options, preferred options consultation
Council leaflets				
Prepare leaflets on specific LDF topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be made relevant to a specific issue, have control over content • Can be distributed in different ways to different audiences, e.g. at meetings, by post, on the web • Can be designed to encourage response: freepost envelope or postcard questionnaire attached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing costs approx. £500 per 1000 colour leaflets -colour, 4 sides • Postage costs: approx £350 per 1,000 people (dedicated post, second class) • Postage can be reduced by e-mailing or distributing with another Council publication, though this may reduce the impact 	Appropriate for all consultation stages
Websites				
Can produce articles and display documents on Merton Council's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can tailor content • Virtually no lead-in time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everybody has easy access to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional cost 	Appropriate for all consultation stages

website: www.merton.gov.uk Can also promote adopted documents through partner planning websites e.g. Planning Portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally accessible 24 hours • Can create electronic response forms to make it easier for people to respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • web or knows how to use it • Sometimes large maps or documents can take a long time to download 		
Direct mailing				
Letter, plus any additional information if needed, to targeted audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately targeted. Can direct people to where more information is held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May generate 'consultation fatigue' if used too often by the Council • Cost 	Postage cost: approx £250 per 1,000 people (letter only, second class) Cost can be reduced by e-mailing or distributing with another Council publication though this may reduce the impact	Appropriate for all consultation stages
Outreach community consultation				
Using the Council's dedicated Community Engagement Officer, voluntary or consultant facilitators to give presentations and question-and-answer sessions on LDF issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for targeted discussions especially for hard-to-reach groups • Can target information to the subject matter and audience • Instant feedback • Can be combined with meetings already being held, e.g. residents association AGM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't ensure meetings will be held to coincide with LDF consultation dates and one-off meetings may not attract enough interest • Requires a dedicated officer 	In the absence of a Community Engagement Officer in Merton Council, or if more support was needed, alternatives include using Planning Aid volunteers or hiring consultants	Appropriate for DPD issues and options stages
Dedicated phone and e-mail				
Merton Council has created a dedicated phone number and several e-mail addresses that people can contact for information on the LDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows people quick and easy access to the Planning team to ask questions and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A helpline rather than a consultation service, doesn't distribute information 	No additional cost	Appropriate for all consultation stages
Councillor surgeries				
Anyone with a question or problem can contact their Ward Councillor at dedicated Councillor surgeries that take place most months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used to raise issues of concern 	Not participatory; useful for letting people raise issues for the Council to respond to.	No additional cost	Appropriate for all consultation stages

Area forums				
Area Forums, covering specific geographical areas, are public local meetings held quarterly for raising issues, sharing information and giving feedback between the local community and the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow people to raise area-based concerns, can help generate in-depth discussion • May attract people who prefer face-to-face contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't ensure Forum will take place during consultation period or that the item will be included on the agenda • Often better for discussing area-related issues rather than general matters 	No additional cost	Appropriate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DPD issues and options - Large or complex area-based SPD - Also appropriate for key issues and options on Area Action Plans (all subject to meeting dates)
Partnership meetings				
Merton Council has around 70 different partnerships. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Merton Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) - Town Centre Working Partnership - Safer Merton (against crime) - South London Connexions Partnership (young people) Consultations can involve discussions with partners, presenting to Partners meetings, distributing information to Partnership members and holding feedback sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for engaging an active audience on specific issues • Useful for in-depth discussions, can improve understanding of issues and concerns relating to a particular group • Cost-effective, especially if attached to an existing partnership meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing meeting dates do not always overlap with consultation periods; • Can't guarantee inclusion on the meeting agenda • May not attract people beyond the partnership concerned 	No additional cost	Appropriate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DPD issues and options - DPD preferred options - Large or complex SPD, especially if it relates to an issue that concerns a particular Partnership
Council Committees and Panels				
Merton Council's committees and panels are organised according to the Council's Constitution. Some of these that are relevant to planning include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council and Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the democratic process, providing decision-making, scrutiny and transparency to LDF production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the democratic process rather than a consultation technique 	No additional costs	Appropriate for all stages of LDF production in line with Merton's constitutional requirements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borough Development Plan Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Regeneration and the Public Realm Scrutiny Panel - Planning Applications Committee <p>Decisions on planning policy matters are made and examined at these meetings. Members of the public can attend some meetings on request.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows members of the public to see how decisions are made and have their say where appropriate <p>(More information on Merton's Constitution is available on www.merton.gov.uk)</p>			
Merton Residents Panel				
<p>This is a group of local people who have agreed to be consulted regularly by Merton Council about services and local matters. Members come from across Merton and are different ages, gender, ethnic background and religious beliefs. They are invited to discussions on specific issues and feedback via quarterly surveys.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for targeted discussions and feedback. High likelihood of response. • Can help give an understanding of local concerns <p>(More information on the Resident's Panels is available on www.merton.gov.uk)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not useful for reaching people who don't volunteer to participate 	No additional cost	<p>Appropriate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DPD issues and options - DPD preferred options - Large or complex SPD <p>(Subject to consultation arrangements)</p>
Staffed exhibitions				
<p>Information is displayed in a public place (e.g. library, on-site), including maps, photos, documents, feedback forms etc. Staff can attend to help explain and answer questions or left unattended for people to browse</p>	<p>Can reach large numbers of people, depending on location Can attract people who otherwise not know about or be interested in planning Can attract people from hard-to-reach groups as doesn't rely on being a member of a particular group or attending a meeting</p>	<p>Useful for area-based issues but not as effective for general policy matters that aren't easy to display as a diagram, photo or map</p>	<p>Varied. Costs can include hiring a venue (if not Council-run), publishing information and staffing costs. Costs for printing maps especially can be high</p>	<p>Appropriate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preferred options stage of Area Action Plans - Preferred options stage relating to area-specific policies - Large or complex area-based SPD

INFORMATION CHANNELS				
INFORMATION METHOD	BENEFITS	WEAKNESSES	COST	WHEN TO BE USED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Merton - a Bi-Monthly magazine • Wimbledon Electronic Notice board - This is board which publicises notices and is located outside Wimbledon Station • 35 Community notice boards located in parks and other public places • 36 large J C Decaux roadside notice panels • Press releases in local newspapers and magazines • Letters to Residents/Tenants Associations • Display boards in Merton Link, the Council one- stop shop • Local libraries • Banners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough-wide distribution • Can inform people who otherwise might not be aware of or interested in planning matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to editorial agreement, competition for space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs dependent on information: no additional costs for most information channels, postage costs for letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different information channels appropriate for DPD issues and options; DPD preferred options; large or complex SPD

5. WHO DO WE CONSULT?

- 5.1 Merton's LDF consultation database includes, community groups, business organisations; voluntary groups and individuals; some examples are listed in Appendix 2. Everybody on the LDF consultation database will automatically be contacted at major stages of the LDF preparation process, unless they request otherwise.
- 5.2 The LDF consultation database is not static but will be continually updated if any group or individual asks to be included. Anybody who would like to join the database should contact the Community Engagement Officer (see paragraph 2.23 for contact details).
- 5.3 When consulting on LDF matters, the Council will make extra effort to engage groups that have traditionally had a low response rate to Council consultations. Examples of some of the 'hard to reach' groups include bodies representing the interests of Ethnic Minority Groups, racial and religious organisations, women and youth organisations, gypsies and travellers



Space Syntax 2005

“Opponents to a planning application are far more motivated than those who support a scheme.”

– Findings of a report “Planning and Community Involvement in Scotland”

6. INVOLVING MERTON'S COMMUNITY ON LDF PREPARATION AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This chapter describes how people can be involved in preparing Merton's LDF. It sets out the different stages involved in creating LDF documents and what consultation methods will be used for each stage.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 6.2 Development Plan Documents (DPDs) contain planning policies that will guide development in Merton for the next 10 years. More details on DPDs and other documents in the LDF - including their timetables under which they will be prepared - can be found in Merton's Local Development Scheme (available at www.merton.gov.uk/planning)

DPD production

- 6.3 Merton Council will produce four DPDs between now and 2008:
- Core Strategy
 - Proposals Map
 - Site Specific Allocations
 - Development Control Policies
- 6.4 The timetable set out in Merton's LDS 2004 –2008 shows that the DPDs will be prepared and consulted upon in parallel. This should help to make the LDF process easier to understand and minimise consultation fatigue.
- 6.5 The following table sets out how the Council will involve the local community in producing a DPD.

A dangerous development for consultation is the trend towards listening because you've been told to do so - rather than because you genuinely want to hear people's views.....(The Consultation Institute 2005)

Development Plan Documents – Community Involvement

Details of DPD preparation	What Merton Council must do under government regulations	What Merton Council will do (along with following government regulations)	Consultation methods to be used (see Chapter 4)
STAGE 1: PRE- PRODUCTION			
Collect background information through surveys and evidence gathering to inform the DPD, e.g. carry out a town centre capacity study; analyse population and employment trends, etc...	No community involvement is required at this stage as part of the regulations	<p>Merton Council considers that it is important to contact the local community early on, so that it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has an early understanding of what the DPD is about and how it will affect the local area. ○ Increases people’s understanding of what the DPD contains and how it is being produced ○ Exposes any potential conflicts so that they can be resolved early in the DPD production process. ○ Regularly updates Merton’s SCI consultation database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Merton Council website ● Council meetings ● One-to-one meetings ● Outreach community consultation
STAGE 2: KEY ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS			
Develop and consult on key issues with the sustainability appraisal scoping report.	<p>Merton Council must consult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each of the specific consultation bodies where it thinks that the DPD’s proposed subject matter would affect the body. 	<p>Merton Council will carry out extensive consultations using a variety of methods and seek feedback from all sections of the community. This stage is also important for raising issues and highlighting potential conflict</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Press release to local papers ● Newspaper notice ● Council leaflets ● Merton Council website ● Direct mail shots ● Outreach community consultation ● Dedicated phone and e-mail ● Councillors surgeries ● Area forums

Development Plan Documents – Community Involvement

Details of DPD preparation	What Merton Council must do under government regulations	What Merton Council will do (along with following government regulations)	Consultation methods to be used (see Chapter 4)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any of the general consultation bodies that Merton Council thinks appropriate. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership meetings ● Committees ● Regular consultation surveys ● Area-based workshops (for area-specific DPD)
STAGE 3: PREFERRED OPTIONS			
<p>Prepare land use and spatial planning 'Preferred Options' report along with the Sustainability Report</p>	<p>Merton Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make copies of all documents available for viewing at the Civic Centre and other appropriate places (e.g. local libraries) ● Publish the documents and the details of the consultation on its website ● Send the documents to the same Specific and General consultation bodies that were considered for the Key Issues consultation ● Advertise the consultation by Public Notice in a local paper ● Allow six weeks for comments to be received. 	<p>At the preferred options stage, Merton Council will consult the community, using a wide variety of techniques, for a six-week period on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bring forward any future development ideas or plans so that they can be considered when creating the DPD for submission; ● Debate and resolve any conflicts that may still exist; ● Reach agreement on the DPD's preferred options. <p>In the interests of transparency, Merton Council will also publish a summary of representations received and notes on how they were dealt with on its website, in the Civic Centre and local libraries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Press release to local papers ● Newspaper notice ● Council leaflets ● Merton Council website ● Direct mail shots ● Outreach community consultation ● Dedicated phone and e-mail ● Councillors surgeries ● Area forums ● Partnership meetings ● Committees ● Regular consultation surveys ● Area-based workshops (for area-specific DPD) ● Staffed exhibitions (for area specific DPD)

Development Plan Documents – Community Involvement

Details of DPD preparation	What Merton Council must do under government regulations	What Merton Council will do (along with following government regulations)	Consultation methods to be used (see Chapter 4)
STAGE 4: SUBMITTED DPD			
<p>Consultation on the DPD that was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination</p>	<p>Merton Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make copies of all documents available for viewing at the Civic Centre and in other appropriate places (e.g. local libraries) • Publish the documents and the details of the consultation on its website; • Send copies of the submitted documents to bodies that were already consulted at key issues and preferred options stages; • Notify anyone who asked to be told when the DPD will be submitted; • Advertise the consultation by Public Notice in a local paper • Allow six weeks for comments to be received. 	<p>The examination timetable allows very little time for changes to be made to the DPD following submission and before examination. It is also expected that extensive earlier consultation will have resolved the majority of issues.</p> <p>An Inspector will examine the DPD independently and consider all the representations received and how Merton Council dealt with them.</p> <p>Merton Council will therefore not consult widely at this stage but will concentrate on providing information to encourage those interested to make representations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release to local papers • Newspaper notice • Council leaflets • Merton Council website • Direct mail shots • Dedicated phone and e-mail • Committees • Merton Link and libraries
<p>Representations proposing changes to site allocations policy (<i>This stage will only apply to the policies and proposals within the Site-Specific Allocations DPD.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the six-week period, if any comments have been made which add, remove or alter a site allocation policy in a submitted DPD, Merton Council will publish them following statutory requirements as detailed above and seek representations during a further six-week consultation period. • The suggested changes to site allocations policy will be reappraised under sustainability criteria and the revised Sustainability Appraisal Report published for consultation at the same time. • Comments submitted at this stage must only relate to the advertised sites or boundary changes; further comments on the submitted DPD or proposals for additional or alternative sites or boundary changes will not be considered. 			

Development Plan Documents – Community Involvement

Details of DPD preparation	What Merton Council must do under government regulations	What Merton Council will do (along with following government regulations)	Consultation methods to be used (see Chapter 4)
STAGE 6: ADOPTION			
Adoption of the DPD	<p>Merton Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the DPD, sustainability appraisal report and adoption statement in Merton Civic Centre and local libraries; • Publish the adoption statement on Merton Council's website • Advertise the adoption statement and where the DPD is available to view in the local paper • Send the adoption statement to anyone who asked to be notified; • Send the DPD and adoption statement to the Secretary of State 	<p>Where possible, Merton Council will also arrange to publish the DPD and supporting documents on its website and on associated planning sites, e.g. the Planning Portal.</p> <p>The Council will also advertise that the DPD has been adopted in MyMerton and other Council documents</p>	N/A

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 6.6 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide greater detail on the planning policies contained in the DPDs; they do not contain planning policies and can not be used to allocate land
- 6.7 SPDs are not part of the development plan and are not subject to independent examination. There is usually only one stage of public participation in producing a SPD. Merton's LDS 2004- 2008 provides details of the SPDs Merton Council will prepare and the timescales for their production.
- 6.8 The following table sets out how Merton's local communities can be involved in producing a SPD.



Did you know that Merton was created from three separate boroughs of Mitcham, Wimbledon and Morden in 1965?

Supplementary Planning Documents – Community Involvement

What Merton Council must do under government regulations	What Merton Council will do as well as following government regulations	Consultation methods to be used (See Chapter 4)
SPD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION		
<p>Merton Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make copies of the documents available at the Civic Centre and at other places the Council considers appropriate (e.g. local libraries); - Publish the documents on Merton Council's website; - Send the documents to the Specific Consultation bodies that the Council thinks are affected by the SPD - Send the documents to the General Consultation bodies that the Council thinks are appropriate; - Advertise the consultation by Public Notice in a local paper; - Allow no less than four but no more than six weeks for people to respond with comments 	<p>Merton Council considers that SPDs covering different subjects may require different approaches to consultation.</p> <p>All SPDs require Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SA will be consulted along on as part of the SPD.</p> <p>These will be advertised in the local paper most appropriate to their area: either the Mitcham & Morden Guardian or the Wimbledon Guardian. They will also be advertised in the Civic Centre and the most appropriate local library.</p> <p>Policy-related SPD that affect the whole borough will be advertised in both papers and all local libraries</p> <p>Particularly large or controversial site-specific SPD may be advertised in both papers and in all local libraries.</p> <p>In all cases, Merton Council will aim to allow six weeks for public consultation.</p>	<p>The consultation techniques used will depend on the nature and extent of the SPD. The following techniques may be used, depending on size and scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release to local papers • Newspaper notice • Council leaflets • Merton Council website • Direct mail shots • Outreach community consultation • Dedicated phone and e-mail • Councillors surgeries • Area forums • Partnership meetings • Committees • Area-based workshops • Targeted articles • Staffed exhibitions

Supplementary Planning Documents – Community Involvement

What Merton Council must do under government regulations	What Merton Council will do as well as following government regulations	Consultation methods to be used (See Chapter 4)
SPD ADOPTION		
<p>Merton Council must publish a copy of the SPD, the adoption statement and a summary of representations received and how they were addressed in the adopted SPD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Civic Centre and any other place that the draft SPD was made available for consultation - On Merton Council's website <p>Merton Council must send a copy of the adoption statement to anyone who asked to be notified.</p>	<p>Merton Council considers that the regulations provide for adequate publicity for the adopted SPD and will not generally carry out more promotional work.</p> <p>The Council may advertise the adoption of specific SPD to Partnership or local area meetings if appropriate</p>	

Planning Applications

- 6.9 The following table sets out how Merton Council will involve the local community when applications are made for each different type of development.
- 6.10 Any member of the local community should have the opportunity to find out about a planning application and make their thoughts known. This includes:
- Statutory bodies
 - Local community, especially neighbouring residents and workers
 - Resident Associations
 - Groups representing particular interests, including community group
 - Any other interested parties
- 6.11 Comments on planning applications will then be taken into account when Merton Council decides whether to grant or refuse permission. In this way the local community can influence development in their local area.

Major Applications – involving the community

- 6.12 Merton Council is responsible for making sure that the local community are fully informed about a scheme requiring a major application. However, the Council advises applicants preparing major applications to start informing and involving the local community before submitting the application and to continue this after submission, while waiting for a decision to be made, and even after the decision has been made.
- 6.13 Indeed, in some cases where a major application is made, the applicant will be expected to produce a statement of how they have publicised the proposals. It will be expected that this will include details of public meetings and exhibitions of proposals. However, the Council will not invalidate a planning application or refuse permission because it disagrees with the method or extent of non-statutory consultation undertaken by developers.

Applicants

- 6.14 As well as any statutory requirements, the applicant may be encouraged to consider use of the following (before and after submitting the application):
- Produce promotional / informative literature (Pre submission)
 - Publicise details via the Internet
 - Explain their ideas through an article in My Merton (Pre submission, included in Local Guardian)

- Write to those directly affected by the scheme (pre-submission, but should be careful in wording of letter so that it is not seen as a letter of consultation about a planning application that has already been submitted. Any such letter should make it clear that it is from the developer and give precise contact details)
- Present / be available to answer questions at relevant Residents Associations / Community group / Trader group meeting (pre and post submission)
- Hold open meetings (pre submission)
- Carry out participation exercises (pre-submission)
- Provide display sessions (pre submission and post submission in conjunction with Merton Council)
- Where appropriate, engage community involvement specialists to assist / facilitate process (pre submission)
- Meet selected stakeholder groups to provide detailed explanation of the scheme and obtain informal feedback (pre submission)
- As part of the planning application to Merton Council, submit a participation statement setting out how the consultation requirements of the SCI have been satisfied and how these have been considered and reflected in the application submitted.

Merton Council

- 6.15 In addition to the statutory requirements, Merton Council may:
- Attend / facilitate such meetings as necessary
 - Provide details on the scheme via Merton Council's website, where appropriate, by linking to details on the applicant's web page
 - State in the Committee Report how the requirements of the SCI have been satisfied, the representations received and how these have been considered and reflected in the recommendations
 - At the discretion of the chair, allow supporters, objectors and / or the applicant to be heard at Committee.
 - Make the final decisions and reasons widely available.



Space Syntax 2005

Planning applications – Community Involvement

NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT METHODS (MINIMUM STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS)	ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION METHODS WHICH MAY BE UNDERTAKEN BY MERTON COUNCIL
1. GENERAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most householder applications, e.g. house extensions, flat conversions to two or three dwellings. • Planning applications for change of use • Applications for advertising hoardings <p>Applications to place telecommunication masts and other equipment</p> <p><u>Telecommunication masts</u> Applications for planning permission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjoining neighbours (owners or occupiers) must be informed. OR • A notice must be displayed on the site for at least 21 days <p>Anybody interested has at least 21 days to view the details of the application and make their comments to the Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above <i>Most telecommunication (except those in conservation area or on listed building) do not require planning permission</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merton Council ensures that site notices are displayed AND neighbouring residents (those in the vicinity the Council considers affected) are consulted by means of an individual letter. • Make the application details available as part of the planning applications list, published weekly on Merton Council’s website and distributed in hard copy to subscribers (for a fee). • In some cases, Merton Council will ask for more than one site notice to be displayed. • Copies of the application will also be available to view at Merton Civic Centre and the nearest reference library (Mitcham, Morden or Wimbledon) • The planning file, containing all representations on the applications, will be available for inspection by appointment, at the Civic Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above If an applicant is near a school, then the applicant and the Council must notify the School authorities. (Merton Council has 56 days to make a decision)

Planning applications – Community Involvement

NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT METHODS (MINIMUM STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS)	ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION METHODS WHICH MAY BE UNDERTAKEN BY MERTON COUNCIL
2. MINOR DEVELOPMENT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 10 dwellings or under 0.5 ha • Other development where floor space is under 1000 sq.m. or site area is over 1ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjoining neighbours (owners or occupiers) must be informed. OR - A notice must be displayed on the site for at least 21 days - Anybody interested has at least 21 days to view the details of the application and make their comments to the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merton Council ensures that site notices are displayed AND neighbouring residents are consulted by means of an individual letter. • Make the application details available as part of the planning applications list, published weekly on Merton Council’s website and distributed in hard copy to subscribers (for a fee). • In some cases, Merton Council will ask for more than one site notice to be displayed.
3. MAJOR DEVELOPMENT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 dwellings or more, or over 0.5ha • Other developments where floorspace is over 1000sqm or the site area is over 1ha • Mineral or waste development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application must be advertised in a local paper • A notice must be displayed on the site for at least 21 days. • Neighbouring residents (those in the vicinity the Council considers affected) must be informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult widely with neighbouring residents, usually by letter. • Display 2 or 3 site notices. • On very large schemes with borough wide or strategic significance Merton Council will encourage the applicant to work in partnership with the LPA and organise residents’ forums to exhibit and explain the proposals. • Organise the exhibition of planning proposals at the Council Offices and, sometimes, at a community hall close to the application site.

Planning applications – Community Involvement

NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT METHODS (MINIMUM STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS)	ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION METHODS WHICH MAY BE UNDERTAKEN BY MERTON COUNCIL
4. DEPARTURES FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN / RIGHTS OF WAY		
<p>Planning applications for development not in accordance with the plans and proposals in the adopted development plan (including the London Plan)</p> <p>Planning applications for schemes which would affect a public right of way (footpath, bridleway, restricted byway, or by way open to all traffic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A notice must be displayed on the site for at least 21 days • The application must be advertised in a local paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Major Development
5. APPLICATIONS ACCOMPANIED BY ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (ES)		
<p>Certain applications, which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.</p>	<p>Planning applications which are accompanied by an ES should be publicised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site display in at least one place on or near the application site for not less than 21 days and • By local advertisement. <p>The LPA should: Send 3 copies of the Statement to the Sec of State plus a copy of the application within 14 days of receiving the Environmental Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A notice must be displayed on the site for at least 21 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Major Development

Planning applications – Community Involvement

NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT METHODS (MINIMUM STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS)	ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION METHODS WHICH MAY BE UNDERTAKEN BY MERTON COUNCIL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application must be advertised in a local paper <p>The applicant should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Merton Council with 3 additional copies of the Environmental Statement for the Secretary of State • Ensure that any copies of the Environmental Statement that are sent to other bodies are accompanied by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A copy of the planning application, plus maps; (b) Inform the body that they can send comments on the application to Merton Council within a certain timeframe; (c) Inform Merton Council which other bodies have been sent this information. 	
6. APPLICATIONS AFFECTING A LISTED BUILDING OR THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA		
Any planning application which involves works to or affects the setting of a listed building or the character and appearance of a conservation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A notice must be displayed on the site for at least 21 days • The application must be advertised in a local paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merton Council will also notify the relevant Resident's Associations and neighbours will be selected using a GIS facility and then notified by letter, providing them with the opportunity to comment on the proposals in writing within a set timeframe.

Planning applications - Community Involvement

NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT METHODS (MINIMUM STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS)	ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION METHODS WHICH MAY BE UNDERTAKEN BY MERTON COUNCIL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications meeting certain criteria are referred to Merton Council's Conservation and Design Advisory Panel (CADAP), which includes representatives from Residents Associations in conservation areas, Council Officers and Ward Councillors, the Landscape Institute, Commission for Architecture and the Build Environment (CABE)

How to find out if a planning application has been made or about the details of a planning application?

- 6.16 By looking at the weekly list of planning applications, which is available to download for free from Merton Council's website or in hard copy from the Planning Admin team for a set fee. Interested parties can pay to receive the planning list in hard copy via a yearly subscription (residents associations pay a reduced rate).
- 6.17 By contacting the development control planning officers. (see para 2.19 for contact details)
- 6.18 Details on a specific application will be displayed on a notice on or near the site and in some cases, via a public notice in the local paper.
- 6.19 Major applications may have extra publicity and information surrounding them. Details on how to access this information will be included in the public notice or by contacting the Duty Planning Officer. Information may also be available via Merton Council's website.

How to make my opinions known?

- 6.20 Comments on a planning application must be sent in writing:
- By post (see SCI Para 2.23)
 - By e-mail (see SCI Para 2.23)
 - By using the e-forms on the Planning pages of Merton Council's website
- 6.21 To help planning officers attribute the comments to the correct application, all comments should be accompanied by the planning application number or the site address with the full postcode.
- 6.22 Should amended plans be submitted before any decision is made, everybody who has submitted written representations in response to initial consultation on a scheme will be re-consulted in writing and given a period of 14 days to comment on the revised proposals.
- 6.23 These comments will be attached to the application file and taken into consideration when deciding whether the application should be granted or refused.
- 6.24 If the application is to be determined by the Council's Planning Committee copies of the Committee agenda can be viewed on the Council website or at Council offices. Individual supporters or objectors wishing to speak at the Planning Committee must write to the Case Officer of his intent to speak at the meeting. The letter is referred to the Committee which then invites the objector/supporter to attend and

Speak at the Planning Committee meeting. The right to address the committee is at the discretion of the Chair and dependant on the number of speakers and the time available (usually the Chair allows a maximum of three speakers and one is allowed three minutes to speak.)

How to find out if an application has been decided?

- 6.25 Once the planning application has been granted or refused, those who commented in writing on the application will be informed of the decision by letter.
- 6.26 The list of planning applications that have been decided is also available weekly on Merton Council's website

What happens once the decision is made?

- 6.27 If full planning permission or other types of consent such as conservation Area or listed building consent is granted, the applicant then has a period set by condition which will usually be three years to start work on the development before the permission expires.
- 6.28 If 'outline' planning permission has been granted, then the applicant must submit more detailed applications (known as 'reserved matters') within three years and have these approved before any work can start.
- 6.29 If the application is refused, the applicant has six months in which to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Most appeals are dealt with through 'written representations' – written statements from the applicant and the Council. Those who commented on the original application will receive a letter from the Council asking them to send comments to the Planning Inspectorate. Representations already submitted on the planning application will be copied to the Planning Inspectorate.

"Most consultations are dominated by the middle aged and the elderly. People under 35 are largely absent from the process. Retired people also dominate the process."- Findings of a report "Planning and Community Involvement in Scotland, 2005"

7. REPORTING BACK

- 7.1 During consultation stages for DPDs and SPDs, the details of any person who makes a written representation will be included on Merton's LDF consultation database, unless otherwise requested. Comments received in writing – including by e-mail – will be acknowledged
- 7.2 Following the six-week public consultation stages for DPDs, the Council will publish a report, which sets out summarised details of written comments received, and the Council's response to them. This document will be available for public viewing at Merton Civic Centre, local libraries and on Merton Council's website. Everybody who has responded will be advised when and where the comments can be viewed or sent copies of documents on request.
- 7.3 The Council will also report to its Members on how the community has been involved and how the Council has complied with the SCI. This will consist of a summary of the outcomes of that involvement, including the main issues raised and the Council's actions in addressing these issues. This information will be taken into account in decisions made by and on behalf of the Council on the content of DPDs and SPDs.
- 7.4 Feedback from SCI consultations from the LDF and planning applications, and also from consultation methods being used elsewhere in the Council, will feed into any review of the SCI. Chapter 2 explains how and when a review of the SCI will be carried out.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1** SCI Tests of Soundness
- Appendix 2** LDF Consultation Database
- Appendix 3** Glossary
- Appendix 4** Merton's Consultation Principles
- Appendix 5** Merton's Consultation Strategy 2002
- Appendix 6** Merton's proposed Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy
- Appendix 7** Merton's Community Plan 2005-2015
- Appendix 8** Content of Merton's Local Development Framework
- Appendix 9** Statement of Community Involvement Chart

APPENDIX 1 – SCI tests of soundness

The Tests of Soundness are detailed in Planning Policy Statement 12 (Local Development Frameworks) and require Statements of Community Involvement to ensure that:

- Local planning authorities comply with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations;
- Local planning authorities strategy for community involvement link with other community involvement initiatives such as the community strategy;
- Identify in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
- Identify how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- Methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
- Resources are available to manage community involvement effectively
- Identify how the results of community involvement will fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
- Local planning authorities have mechanisms for reviewing their statements of community involvement;
- Local planning authorities policies for consultation on planning applications are clearly described.

APPENDIX 2 – LDF Consultation Database

Merton's LDF consultation database for planning policy contains over 1000 entries (both organisations and individuals). The list below is an example of some of the organisations that are represented.

If you or your organisation wishes to be added to the database, please contact us at policyandinformationteam@merton.gov.uk or on 020 8545 4847.

SPECIFIC CONSULTEES

When preparing planning policy, Merton Council will consult all of the Specific Consultees in accordance with the Planning Regulations and government advice on good practice:

Government Bodies, including

- Government Office for London (GOL)
- Mayor of London
- London Development Agency
- Adjacent planning authorities:
 - LB of Croydon
 - RB of Kingston
 - LB of Lambeth
 - RB of Richmond
 - LB of Sutton
 - LB of Wandsworth
- The Countryside Agency
- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage (The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England)
- English Nature

Service providers: health and transport

- South West London Strategic Health Authority (contact for Dept of Health)
- Merton and Sutton Primary Care Trust
- The Strategic Rail Authority
- Transport for London
- The Highways Agency

Utility providers (including telecommunications)

Electricity, gas and water:

- British Gas
- EDF Energy
- National Grid (Transco and Electricity Transmission)
- Npower

- Powergen
- Scottish and Southern Energy
- Scottish Power
- Seeboard Energy
- Sutton and East Surrey Water Services
- Thames Water

Telecommunications:

- BT
- Cable and Wireless
- Hutchinson 3G
- NTL
- O2
- OFCOM
- Orange
- Sky
- T-Mobile
- Telewest
- Virgin Mobile

GENERAL CONSULTEES

When preparing planning policy and guidance, Merton Council will also consult as many general consultation bodies as are appropriate.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

Government departments, e.g.:

- Home Office
- Cabinet Office
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Education and Skills
- Department for Transport
- Department for Trade and Industry
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department of Works and Pensions

(Consultation with the government departments listed above can be carried out via the Government Office for London on request)

- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Constitutional Affairs
- Office of Government Commerce (Property Advisers to the Civil Estate)

Other organisations

- Bodies which represent the business community in Merton,
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled people in Merton,
- Bodies which represent the interests of difference racial, ethnic or national groups in Merton

- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in Merton,
- Design, property and regeneration professionals
- Educational organisations (including both Primary and Secondary Schools)
- Environmental organisations
- Police and Police Organisations
- Residents and Housing Associations
- Tenants Associations
- Sports organisations
- Transport and travel organisations,
- House builders

APPENDIX 3 - GLOSSARY

(Those terms included in the Glossary are printed in bold italics.)

Adoption	The stage at which the local planning authority can adopt, by resolution of the Council, the <i>Local Development Document</i> as Council policy.
Adoption Process	The statutory process by which a local planning authority prepares, publishes and formally adopts a <i>Local Development Document</i>
Area Designations	Areas identified on the <i>Proposals Map</i> within which certain policies will apply.
Community	Community is a group of people living, visiting the Borough, who represent a specific area or issue and who would have a direct claim/benefit in being involved in happenings in the area.
Core Strategy	A <i>Local Development Document</i> (which is also a <i>Development Plan Document</i>), which provides a written statement of the policies for delivering the spatial strategy and vision for the area, supported by a reasoned justification.
Development Plan	A document, or documents, which set out a local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and other use of land and buildings within its area. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, in the case of areas in Greater London, the development plan is the Spatial Development Strategy (<i>London Plan</i>) and the <i>Development Plan Documents</i> (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area. In the case of conflict, policies in the most recently approved plan take precedence.
Development Plan Document	A <i>Local Development Document</i> , which must be subjected by the local planning authority to a statutory adoption process before it can be formally adopted by the authority. The stages, which make up this process consist of key issues and preferred options consultation, submission, Independent Examination (with pre-examination meeting), receipt of Inspector's Report, receipt of Secretary of State's approval, and formal adoption.
Environment Impact assessment (EIA)	<i>EIA</i> is a detailed report in a form required by regulations. It has to be submitted with a planning application for projects that will have significant environmental effects. This would include major developments requiring extensive infrastructure or those likely to generate large amounts of traffic.
Independent Examination	A formal hearing, presided over by an Inspector or a Panel of Inspectors are appointed by the Secretary of State, to test the 'soundness' of the policies and proposals of the local planning authority's <i>Statement of Community Involvement</i> and <i>Development Plan Documents</i> . Persons who have made a response on these documents at the submission

stage have a right, if they so wish, to present their case at the Independent Examination. Documents, the SCI in particular, may also be examined by written representations only.

Inspector's Report	A report issued by the Inspector or Panel who conducted the Independent Examination , setting out their conclusions on the matters raised at the Examination and detailing the amendments which they require the local planning authority to make to the submitted version of the Statement of Community Involvement and Development Plan Documents . The Inspector's Report is binding on the local planning authority.
Local Development Document (LDD)	A document which forms part of the Local Development Framework and which can be adopted and revised as a single entity. These documents can comprise of Development Planning Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A "folder" of Local Development Documents , drawn up by the local planning authority, which, together with the London Plan, form part of the development plan for its area.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	A document setting out the local planning authority's intentions for its Local Development Framework ; in particular, the Local Development Documents it intends to produce and the timetable for their production and review.
London Plan	Also known as the Spatial Development Strategy, this document was produced by the Mayor of London to provide a strategic framework for the boroughs' Unitary Development Plans . It will now perform this function in respect of Local Development Frameworks . Published in February 2004, it forms part of the development plan under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
Planning Policy Statements	Planning Policy Statements are issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and set out the Government's land use planning policies for England. They will replace Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) in time. The Government is in the process of reviewing all its existing guidance.
Proposals Map	A Local Development Document (which is also a Development Plan Document) which comprises a map of the local planning authority's area, and shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and revised <i>designations</i> of areas of land. • Sites for particular future land uses or developments. • Locations of proposed or actual area plans.
Stakeholders	They include individuals, groups, organisations or companies that would be affected directly or indirectly by or could impact on the implementation of a project within the area.
Statement of	A Local Development Document that is not a

Community Involvement (SCI)	<p>Development Plan Document but which is subject to a statutory adoption process. It consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for involving the community in the review of all parts of the Local Development Framework and in development control decisions. • standards for good practice in engaging those with an interest in development. • guidelines on how the community will be consulted over planning applications.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	<p>A tool for integrating environmental considerations into decision-making by ensuring that any significant environmental effects of the decision are taken into account. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) must form an integral part of the adoption process for nearly all Local Development Documents and must be taken into account right from the initial stages of plan preparation. SEA is integrated with the process of Sustainability appraisal.</p>
Submission	<p>A stage in the statutory process for the adoption of Statement of Community Involvement and Development Plan Documents. The local planning authority presents the document to the Secretary of State, at which point the public have a 6-week opportunity to make a formal response to the document, whether in support of, or as objections to, its provisions. This followed by the examination stage</p>
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	<p>A Local Development Document which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies in a Development Plan Document; they can not be used to create new policies or allocate land. They will not be subject to independent examination and will not form part of the statutory development plan. However they will be subject to the procedures of community involvement and sustainability appraisal.</p>
Sustainability Appraisal	<p>The examination of a Local Development Document to ascertain whether its policies and proposals will be in accord with the principles of sustainability. The process complies with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p>
Unitary Development Plan (UDP)	<p>A type of development plan introduced in 1986. It is due to be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. Merton Council's Unitary Development Plan was adopted in October 2003.</p>

APPENDIX 4 – Merton’s consultation principles

1. Consultation must be meaningful and should be only undertaken to influence and inform a decision.
2. When consulting all views expressed will be listened to, respected and considered carefully.
3. Consultation will seek to involve all those potentially affected by decisions taken. Where possible we will involve all sections of the community and make special provision to include people neglected by traditional forms of consultation.
4. Wherever practical, we will respond fully to the views expressed to us. We will try to explain the reasons why particular decisions have been taken.
5. Consultation will take a variety of forms and utilise a range of methods. We will use methods that are most appropriate for the issues under consideration, ensuring the best use of resources.
6. Where it is possible and appropriate we will work in partnership with other public, private and voluntary sector organisations to undertake joint consultation.
7. We will always explain the purpose of the consultation and ensure that sufficient time is given to allow for consultation and be clear about our timetable.
8. We will build on existing best practice in consultation in Merton and elsewhere. We will move beyond traditional methods and develop innovative and effective ways of consulting the public where this is possible.

APPENDIX 5 – Merton’s consultation strategy 2002

Merton’s consultation strategy resulted from an internal Scrutiny Panel review of consultation undertaken in 2002.

The Consultation Strategy was devised to reflect Council requirements in the 1990’s when Best Value reviews were a principal driver of community involvement and engagement. Consultation was the more frequently used form of community involvement. Seeking residents’ views and other stakeholders on specific services and service options and responding accordingly was the principal form of community involvement. The Consultation Strategy includes guidance on the following:

- Merton’s achievements and examples of good practice
- Information on mechanisms and resources such as the Residents Panel and Corporate Consultation database
- Key drivers of consultation in the Council
- Merton’s Principles of consultation
- A menu of methods and tools for consultation
- Signposting actions for the future – including a consultation website

A copy of Merton’s principles of consultation is enclosed in Appendix 5. The Council has had regard to these principles in preparing this Draft SCI.

The Council intends to update the Consultation Strategy 2002 and include it within a Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy. Factors justify the need for this Strategy to be updated including the need:

- To reflect current government guidance and good practice.
- To broaden the Strategy so that it becomes one aspect of the Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy. The developing Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy refers to a more long term cross cutting partnership with service users residents and stakeholders. The Council acknowledges that its aims should be not only to attain views but also achieve more effective community participation and joint decision making
- To improve local relationships, trust and create effective partnerships

The proposed Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy document will be finalised and published in September 2005

APPENDIX 6 – Merton’s proposed Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy

The proposed Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy document will include an update of Merton’s Consultation Strategy. Like Merton’s Consultation Strategy 2002, the proposed Strategy document will set out a broad vision and will include the following components:

- Identify resources and mechanisms to assist in coordinating and improving practice
- Identify examples of good practice concerning community engagement and involvement
- Provide information on methods, approaches and tools concerning community engagement and involvement

Government Guidance contained in Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter ODPM 2004 recommends the following community engagement principles:

- Know and understand local communities
- Help build the confidence of the community – particularly where deprivation may limit resources and capacity
- Take active steps to involve the community as widely as possible
- Ensure no group or sector dominates – have agreed standards of conduct and value diversity
- Make sure procedures for ensuring representation are transparent
- Provide practical assistance
- Demonstrate positive support for community engagement by feeding back and reporting what impact messages have had on decisions

The proposed Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy document will have regard to these principles. Similarly the process of community engagement detailed in Merton’s SCI adheres to these principles.

Other strategies and policies detailed in the above diagram include the following:

- Merton Compact – is a partnership agreement between the Council, Merton & Sutton PCT and the voluntary and community sector which sets out what they can expect from each other. There are principles underpinning the Compact including community involvement and voluntary action, communication, funding and consultation.
- Merton’s Corporate Equality Programme (CEP) – sets out Merton’s programme for promoting equality of opportunity and promoting diversity. The CEP includes the statutory Race Equality Scheme, which sets out how the Council will tackle discrimination and promote equality and good race relations.

- Overview and Scrutiny Panels work involves members of the public, officers and stakeholders giving evidence or taking an interest in the review and implementation of recommendations
- Merton Communications Strategy – sets an action plan for improving communications within the authority and with external partners and stakeholders
- Merton Publications Scheme – gives an undertaking about providing access to information
- Merton Complaints Policy – describes Merton’s approach to responding to complaints and comments from the service users and the public about services
- Merton’s E-Government Strategy – sets out how the Council will provide services and information online and supply opportunities for customer feedback

APPENDIX 7 – Merton’s Community Plan 2005-15

Merton’s current Community Plan Framework Document was published in March 2005. It sets out the vision of local people for enhancing the economic, social and environmental well being of the local area. The framework will be consulted on during 2005/06 and developed into a full Community Plan by March 2006.

At the heart of the Community Plan process is Merton Partnership, a multi-agency partnership of local stakeholders, which is responsible for the Plan. All the main community partners, including Merton Council, will work through Merton Partnership to bring the plan into action.

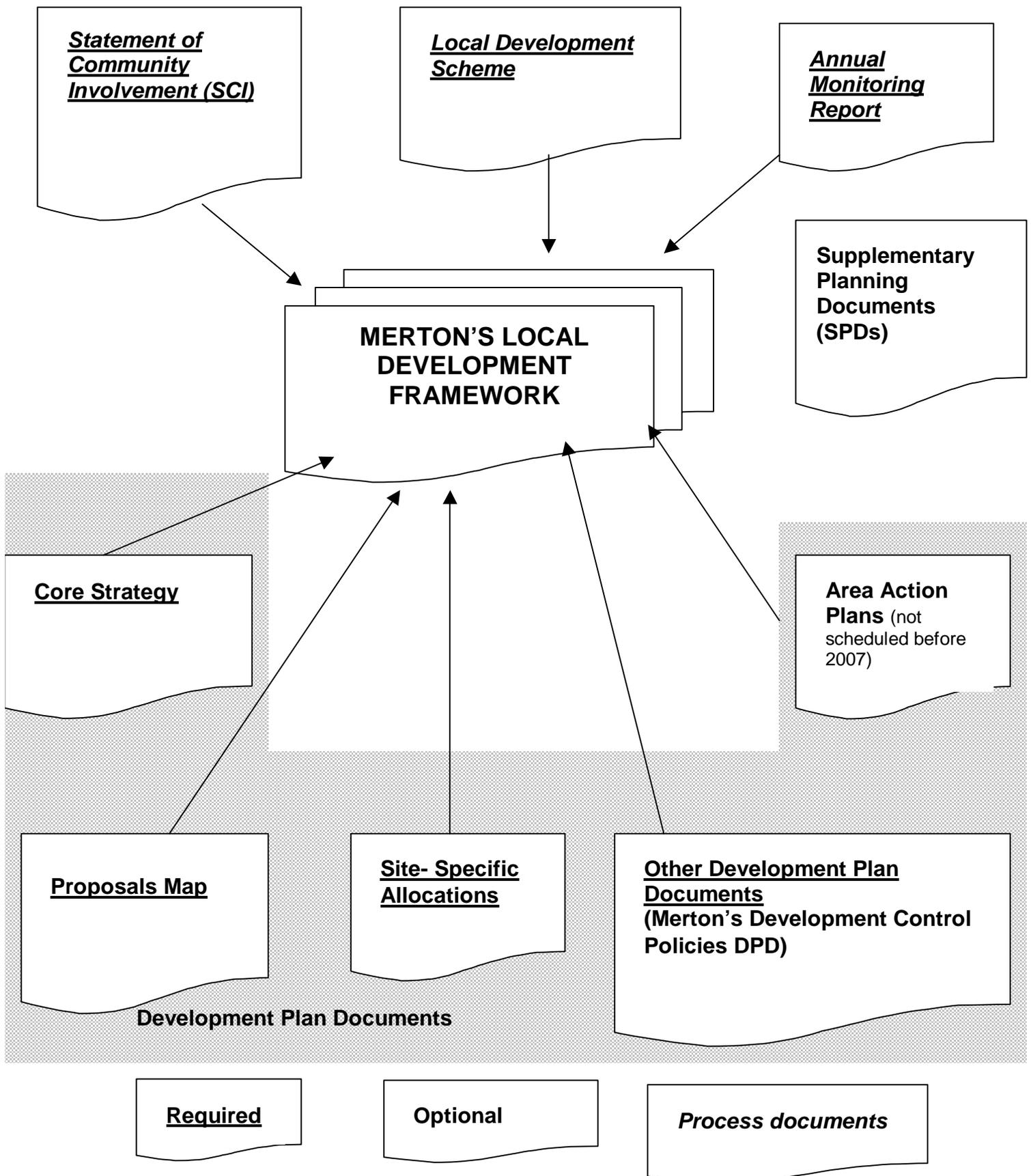
Merton Partnership have agreed a ten year vision for Merton which will drive the Community Plan:

- An action plan identifying targets, priorities and activities to address the long term vision
- Identified shared commitments to implement the Plan
- Arrangements for monitoring, reviewing and reporting implementation and progress

Merton’s Community Plan Framework has eight main objectives:

- Creating a clean sustainable environment
- Driving out crime
- Increasing transport choice
- Investing in Merton’s community
- Providing quality housing
- Inspiring education and skills
- Energising business
- Improving Health

APPENDIX 8 - Content of Merton's LDF



APPENDIX 9- Statement of Community Involvement

Chart setting out the SCI process and formal consultation stages

