

**INSPECTOR'S REPORT**  
**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**ANNEXE B – CORRESPONDENCE**



# The Planning Inspectorate

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John Waterton  
Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
Time Square  
Market Street  
Bracknell  
Berkshire  
RG12 1JD

Your Ref:

Our Ref: PINS/C0305/429/4

Date: 2 May 2006

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Dear Mr.Waterton,

## **BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

1.1 I note that in the "Report of responses to representations received" the Council have helpfully put forward wording that I might consider using in recommending amendments to the Submission Document SCI. However, I consider further clarification is necessary in respect of the points outlined below:

### *Point 1*

Pages 1, 2 and 56 contain information that will be historic and no longer relevant in the final version of the SCI. How should these pages be amended?

### *Point 2*

In association with point 1, how does the Council propose that pages 1, 2 and 56 be amended to explain what the document is about and why people should be interested in it? (Representation SCI 04)

### *Point 3*

Should there be a commitment in the SCI to producing all future documentation in plain English and other formats/languages upon request? (Whilst paragraph 9.4 refers to "other formats", this simply relates to non-internet based formats).

### *Point 4*

Should the telephone number provided in the Council's suggested additional wording to paragraph 5.5 differ from that provided elsewhere in the SCI?

*Point 5*

Should Table 1 (page 25), Table 2 (page 28) and Appendix 7 (page 53) indicate that publishing the Inspector's Report on the web-site is "What the Council must do" rather than "What extra" the Council may do, (Regulation 35)?

*Point 6*

Should Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU) be a Specific Consultation Body listed in Appendix 1? (JSPU have been listed by the Council as a Specific body in the Regulation 31 statement).

*Point 7*

In Appendix 7, should what is meant by "UAs" and "JSPU" be clearly defined?

*Point 8*

In Appendix 7, (page 49) should the sub-heading "Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document" be replaced by "Development Plan Documents"?

*Point 9*

In Appendix 7, (page 53) if SPDs are to be produced, should there be a new sub-heading "Supplementary Planning Documents" and further text added to cover stages 1-3?

*Point 10*

In Appendix 7, (page 54) should adjoining Regional Development Agencies be added to the list of specific consultation bodies?

*Point 11*

In Appendix 7, (page 55) should text be added to indicate how an individual or organisation can be added to the free-standing register of consultees?

*Point 12*

In Appendix 7, (page 55) should " , travelling showpeople" be added to the "Type of Group Examples"?

*Point 13*

In Appendix 7, should there be a commitment to producing all future documentation in plain English and other formats/languages upon request?

1.2 As you appreciate, the binding report should "set out precise recommendations for how the statement of community involvement must be changed", (Para 3.11, PPS12). Therefore, any further suggested amendments to the wording of the SCI that you consider would add clarity to the document would be welcomed. Once you have submitted your response to this letter, I will attempt to complete the report as quickly as possible. Please reply to Steve Carnaby whose details are given above.

Yours sincerely



Keith Holland  
Inspector

## **Council's Response to Inspector's Questions**

### **Point One – Amend Pages 1, 2 and 6**

Pages 1 and 2 of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) detail the Statement of Development Plan Matters which can be deleted for the purposes of publishing the adopted version of the SCI.

It is suggested that the content of pages 1 and 2 could be replaced by a Foreword to the SCI including the information highlighted by the Inspector under his Point 2 (see below and Appendix 1 to this statement for suggested text).

It is also suggested that Page 56 could be amended as appears at Appendix 2 to this statement.

For the sake of consistency, it is further suggested that as much as possible of the existing text on pages 1, 2 and 56 of the Submission version of the SCI, albeit slightly re-ordered, is retained in the final version of the SCI document and that additional text reflects that in the main body of the document (thereby helping the Foreword to act almost as an Executive Summary).

The statement on “alternative formats”, and its location, accords with the adopted Corporate Standard contained in “All of Us” the Borough Council’s Corporate Strategy for Promoting Community Cohesion 2004/05 – 2006/07. The Cohesion Strategy is based on good practice and has been lauded by the Improvement and Development Agency and the Local Government Association. Future revisions of the Cohesion Strategy, which will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, will advise the preparation of future documents.

### **Point 2 – Amended Pages 1 and 2**

In response to the particular representation (SCI 04), it is suggested that the SCI document could be improved by the addition of a simple sub-title on the front cover (suitably designed in the LDF house-style); such as:

#### **“How to comment on local Planning issues”**

On further reflection, similar to the Borough Council’s Community Cohesion Strategy, and on the grounds of proportionality, it is not considered necessary to repeat the title and sub-title in other languages.

As stated above, it is suggested that pages 1 and 2 of the document could be re-drafted as a Forward to omit any historical matters, provide a summary of matters discussed in the document (under the headings Why, Who and How) and to retain the statement on “alternative formats/languages”.

Suggested words for the Introduction are detailed at Appendix 1 to this statement.

### **Point 3 – Future Documentation**

The SCI and LDF are by nature fairly technical documents and their preparation is governed by legislation (Act of Parliament, Regulations) and government

guidance, and overseen by Government Offices, which require certain terms and phrases to be used.

Whilst the Borough Council cannot commit to obtaining a Plain English crystal mark for every document on the grounds of expense and proportionality, it does endeavour to make its documents interesting and readable by the use of graphic design, proof reading and member, peer and service department review.

In response to the Inspector's specific question regarding plain English and other formats/languages, again on the grounds of proportionality and cost, it is suggested that the SCI may benefit from additional text (possibly as a new paragraph 8.1 – paragraphs 8.1 to 8.12 would become 8.2 to 8.13) indicating that summary documents (as per the Community Cohesion Strategy) can be provided upon request; such as:

**8.1 Many of the planning documents prepared by the Borough Council are, by their nature, technical and contain terms and phrases required by legislation or used commonly within the planning system. In order to that no one is disadvantaged by not understanding the terms used in its planning documents, the Borough Council will endeavour to produce them in plain English and, where technical terms are necessary, provide appropriate explanations. Further, to exclude no one from commenting on the planning process on grounds of disability or nationality, the Borough Council will make summaries of its planning documents available in large print, Braille or on audio cassette upon request, and copies in other languages may also be obtained.**

#### **Point 4 – Telephone number**

Since the preparation of the Submission version of the SCI in October 2005, the Borough Council has introduced a new Customer Services telephone number (01344 352000) as detailed in the suggested additional wording to paragraph 5.5. Accordingly, all references to any other contact telephone number in the SCI should be corrected to indicate the new Customer Services number (01344 352000).

#### **Point 5 – Regulation 35 matters**

In order to comply with Regulation 35(2)(b), it is suggested that Table 1 (page 25), Table 2 (page 28) and Appendix 7 (page 53), should be corrected to indicate that publishing the Inspector's Report (of Recommendations and Reasons) on the Borough Council's website is "What the Council must do".

#### **Point 6 – Specific Consultation Bodies**

The term "specific consultation bodies" is defined in Regulation 2 including, at subparagraph (a)(vii), "a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority". The term "relevant authority" is also included in Regulation 2. The Joint Strategic Planning Authority does not constitute any of the three definitions of a "relevant authority" and so should not appear in Appendix 1 to the SCI.

The Act of Parliament which abolished Berkshire County Council also designated the six Borough/District Councils lying within Berkshire as Unitary Authorities and required the six Unitary Authorities to continue to jointly prepare a Structure Plan and individual Local Plans (rather than Unitary Development Plans) and to continue to work in partnership to administer "County Matters"; such as, structure, waste and minerals planning. The six Unitary Authorities set up the Joint Strategic Planning Unit to administer the "County Matters".

The Joint Unit has no decision making powers. But, as the Joint Strategic Planning Unit administers "County Matters" on behalf of the six Unitary Authorities, it was felt necessary to identify the Joint Unit in the Regulation 31 statement as the correct body for generating representations on "County Matters" on behalf of the six Unitary Authorities and because the Borough Council should respond to the Joint Strategic Planning Unit when responding to representations relating to "County Matters".

### **Point 7 – Definition of UAs and JSPU in Appendix 7**

Usually, in Borough Council documents, the use of capital letters as a shortened form of a name are placed in brackets (for example, Unitary Authorities becomes (UAs)) immediately after the name is used for the first time in full in each section of a document and the shortened capital letters are used from then on until the document is divided into another Section when the process begins again.

Appendix 7 (The Berkshire Unitary Authorities Joint Minerals and Waste Community Involvement Protocol) is introduced at paragraph 7.8 of the SCI document where the phrase ".....with the other Unitary Authorities in Berkshire, ....." . This is the only time that the term "Unitary Authorities" is used before Appendix 7, some 32 pages before Appendix 7. To use the shortened form at paragraph 7.8 and expect it to be remembered by readers some 32 pages later might be considered unreasonable.

The term "Unitary Authority" appears in the third paragraph of Appendix 7 and presents an opportunity to introduce its shortened version (UA). See the commentary on JSPU (below) with regard to introducing the term "Unitary Authorities (UAs)".

Appendix 7 immediately follows Appendix 6 which details a glossary of terms. It is suggested that, UA/UAs could be included in the Glossary; in the following way:

**Unitary Authority/Unitary Authorities (UA/UAs):** Administrative unit of Great Britain. Since 1996 the two-tier structure of local government has ceased to exist in Scotland and Wales, and in some parts of England, and has been replaced by unitary authorities, responsible for all local government services. The six Local Authorities within the former Royal County of Berkshire which have responsibility for planning matters are: Bracknell Forest Borough Council; Reading Borough Council; Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; Slough Borough Council; West Berkshire District Council, and Wokingham District Council

This definition reflects that used on the JSPU website.

Unfortunately, the term "Joint Strategic Planning Unit" is not used in full in the document before being used in shortened form (JSPU) in the table on page 49.

It is suggested that this term could also be included in the Glossary at Appendix 6 as:

**Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU):** the planning service jointly funded by the six Unitary Authorities within the former Royal County of Berkshire which administers planning matters which have a County, rather than local, impact; such as the structure plan, waste and minerals and provides a range of information services.

This definition reflects information contained on the JSPU website.

It is further suggested that, in order to introduce the (JSPU) and (UAs) shortened versions the first paragraph of Appendix 7 could be amended, as follows:

**The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has changed the planning system in this country, and the old style Minerals and Waste Local Plan for Berkshire will be replaced with a Minerals and Waste Development Framework to be prepared by the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU) on behalf of the six Unitary Authorities (UAs) lying within the former County of Berkshire.**

#### **Point 8 – Development Plan Documents**

Appendix 7 refers specifically to the Joint Minerals and Waste Community Involvement Protocol and Minerals and Waste Policy Consultations. The Community Involvement Protocol will be applied to all the Development Plan Documents prepared under the Joint Minerals and Waste Development Framework on behalf of all the Berkshire Unitary Authorities. Therefore, in order to be consistent with paragraphs 7.8 and 7.9 of the SCI, the sub-heading at page 49 of Appendix 7 should refer to “**Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents**”.

#### **Point 9 – Minerals and Waste Supplementary Planning Documents**

The Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme does not include the preparation of any Supplementary Planning Documents. There is then no need to include provisions for consultation on Minerals and Waste Supplementary Planning Documents in the Community Involvement Protocol.

#### **Point 10 – Regional Development Agencies**

The Specific Consultation Bodies detailed at Regulation 2 include, at sub-paragraph (viii), “a Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority”.

Bracknell Forest Borough is included in the area covered by the South East of England Regional Development Agency which is included in the list of Specific Consultees (at Appendix 1) to the Community Involvement Protocol (Appendix 7 of the SCI).

However, the former County of Berkshire extends from West Berkshire District in the west which adjoins the South West of England Development Agency to Slough

Borough in the east which adjoins the London Development Agency. These could either be included specifically in the list of Specific Consultees or in a suggested generic form (in case there are any future changes to Regional Development Agency boundaries) as:

- **Adjoining Regional Development Agencies**

#### **Point 11 – Additions to Free Standing Register of Consultees**

See Point 13 below.

#### **Point 12 - Travelling Showpeople**

Given the recent planning definition of “gypsies and travellers” which specifically excludes travelling showpeople”, it is suggested that “travelling showpeople” could be added to the Type of Group Examples which immediately follow Appendix 3 of the Community Involvement Protocol, in the following location:

**Local Groups Representing the elderly, youth, religious, ethnic, disability, voluntary and wildlife groups, community and residents’ associations, gypsies and travellers, travelling showpeople.**

#### **Point 13 – Future Minerals and Waste Documentation**

It is suggested that, in respect of additions to the Register of Consultees, plain English and other formats and languages, additional text could be added to the end of the Community Involvement Protocol at Appendix 7 to the SCI, as follows:

**Anyone wishing to be informed of the preparation of any of the Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents or of amending their contact details should notify the Joint Strategic Planning Unit via its website [www.berks-jspu.gov.uk](http://www.berks-jspu.gov.uk) or at:**

**St Mary's House, c/o Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF**

**Telephone: 01628 796749 Facsimile: 01628 796739**

**Often the terminology and acronyms used in planning, and in minerals and waste planning in particular, can be bewildering for the professional and layperson alike. A glossary providing definitions of the terms and phrases used will be included in each Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document and on the Joint Strategic Planning Unit website [www.berks-jspu.gov.uk](http://www.berks-jspu.gov.uk).**

**If you have any problem reading the Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents please contact the Joint Strategic Planning Unit, to arrange for the documents to be provided in an alternative format or language.**

This statement reflects information included on the Joint Strategic Planning Website.

## Appendix 1

### REPLACEMENT PAGES 1 & 2 (using LDF document standard format in the SCI)

#### BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

#### STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### FOREWORD

##### Why prepare the Statement of Community Involvement?

Planning helps define the places where people, live, work, learn and play. Bracknell Forest Borough Council is responsible for developing planning policies and making planning decisions. In undertaking the local planning process, the Council seeks the views of the public. As planning affects all of us, the Council wants everyone to have the chance to become involved in the planning process which shapes the environment around us.

To achieve this, this Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared. It identifies the preferred ways in which the Borough Council will seek to increase people's involvement in the planning process. Its aim is:

**“To give all people the opportunity to be engaged in the local planning process which shapes the environment of Bracknell Forest Borough”.**

This aim accords with the overarching vision in the Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Plan “Living Together Working Together” prepared by agencies which deliver public services, representatives of businesses and people who represent voluntary organisations and the community along with the Borough Council. This vision states that:

**“In 2015, the community of Bracknell Forest will be self-confident, socially cohesive, economically buoyant and renowned for its “can do” attitude. Living and working in Bracknell Forest will mean having an excellent quality of life. Local people will be safe and healthy. They will have a home that meets their needs and be able to travel easily around the borough, particularly by public transport. The distinctive, quality environment of Bracknell Forest will be enhanced and the community and learning will be valued throughout people's lives”.**

Not only does the Statement of Community Involvement allow the community to have an input into enhancing the distinctive, quality environment of Bracknell forest Borough by commenting on the local planning process, but it also promotes social cohesion by ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to comment. Enabling this ability to comment on the local planning process through the Statement of Community Involvement also supports the goal in “All of Us”, the Borough Council's Community Cohesion Strategy, of:

**“Promoting community cohesion through participative, community and public involvement in shaping action”.**

## Who should read the Statement of Community Involvement?

The Statement of Community Involvement will be useful to any person who:

- is interested, or involved, in or who may be affected by planning issues and decisions within Bracknell Forest Borough; and
- wishes to find out about, and become more involved in, planning issues and decisions within Bracknell Forest Borough.

The local planning process consists of the Local Development Framework and Development Control.

The Local Development Framework is a new process and comprises a set of documents which together detail the Borough Council's planning policies for the control of, and proposals for, development. The Borough Council has recently begun preparation of its Local Development Framework and the Statement of Community Involvement governs how the Borough Council will engage with people when publicising its emerging policies and proposals and seeking comments on them.

Development Control relates to the consideration of planning applications. The community could be engaged prior to submission, at submission and during the consideration of a planning application. The Statement of Community Involvement details the ways in which planning applications will be advertised (for example, site notices) and how comments might be made (for example, electronic submission via the Borough Council's website).

## How should people respond?

The Borough Council often prepares comment forms, in both paper and electronic format, when representations are sought on the documents it produces. In such instances, it is preferable if use is made of these forms. However, comments will always be accepted in other formats (for example, letter or e-mail) and can be delivered in any manner (for example, electronically, posted, in person or by facsimile).

In summary, the Statement of Community Involvement sets out **who** will be consulted, **when** and **how** they can get involved, and the resources for carrying out consultation. It can be **viewed** at main Borough Council offices, libraries, Town and Parish Council offices, and on-line at [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk).

## Alternative Formats

A summary of the Statement of Community Involvement can be made available in large print, in Braille or on audio cassette upon request, and copies in other languages may also be obtained, from:

### The Development Plan Team

Planning and Transport Policy Section  
Environment and Leisure Department  
Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
Time Square, Market Street  
Bracknell, Berkshire  
RG12 8XP  
Telephone: 01344 352000

E-mail: [development.plan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:development.plan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

## Appendix 2

### REPLACEMENT PAGE 56 (using LDF document standard format in the SCI)

#### CONTACT

##### Further Information

To discuss further any elements of this Statement of Community Involvement, please contact the **Development Plan Team** in the Planning and Transport Policy Section at **Bracknell Forest Borough Council**. This can be done:

**in person** between the hours of 8.45am – 5.15pm (Monday to Thursday) and 8.45am – 4.45pm (Friday) at, or **by post** to:

Environment and Leisure Department  
Time Square, Market Street  
Bracknell, RG12 1JD

**by telephone** on 01344 352000, or

**by e-mail** at [development.plan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:development.plan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

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