

Medway Statement of Community Involvement – Coronavirus update

August 2021

Due to the unprecedented situation caused by Covid-19 the Planning Service had to implement a number of temporary measures to facilitate publicity and consultation activities in a safe manner. This was to respect social distancing guidance and to ensure that public health considerations were observed in all planning matters.

Despite restrictions being lifted and Council contact points being open, Planning Service consultation activities continue to vary from the guidelines outlined in the current Statement of Community Involvement.

Engaging with the Community

For the foreseeable future Planning Service stakeholder engagement will continue to be conducted via email, online and through our website rather than via public exhibitions, meetings or workshops. We will keep the situation under review.

In line with the Statement of Community Involvement, stakeholders on the Council's Local Plan Consultation Database will be contacted if there is a specific consultation being undertaken on the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents or Guidance. Please also look out for notifications in the local press and/or on our website:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200133/planning/525/planning_public_consultations

The current changes to practice relate mainly to the methods of engagement as detailed in section 2.24 of the adopted SCI:

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/141/medway_statement_of_community_involvement

Neighbourhood Plans

The Government suspended any referendum on a Neighbourhood Plan until 6 May 2021¹. It advises that plans that have reached the stage of referendum will be given significant weight in decision making:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2# covid-19>

Planning Applications

During the time of Covid-19 restrictions, the scheme of delegation was broadened so that a wider range of planning applications could be considered outside of committee,

¹ No update as at 4/8/21

and arrangements made for virtual meetings of Planning Committee. From August 2021 the scheme of delegation came to an end and Councillors and staff are now required to attend Planning Committee in person. However, these meetings will also continue to be streamed online.

Further information in relation to planning matters and Covid-19 is available on the Planning Advisory Service website:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/our-work/planning-covid-19>

More broadly, guidance is available on the latest position in relation to Covid-19 from the government via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-update>

Information in relation to Medway Council activities is available in the following locations:

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/coronavirus>

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200373/coronavirus_service_updates

[https://www.medway.gov.uk/coronavirussupport#:~:text=Coronavirus%20\(COVID%2D19\)%20Medway%20support,neighbours%20who%20can%20help%20them.](https://www.medway.gov.uk/coronavirussupport#:~:text=Coronavirus%20(COVID%2D19)%20Medway%20support,neighbours%20who%20can%20help%20them.)