

STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

Consultation pursuant to regulation 25(1)

A total of 2334 groups and individuals were contacted comprising:

- Local groups and organisations (from list used for Community Strategy consultation)
- Respondents to emerging local plan (including groups, businesses and individuals)
- Those who had requested to be kept informed
- Statutory Consultees/DPD bodies

How this consultation was carried out:

- Extensive mailshot of letter and questionnaire with consultation from 27th May – July 8th 2005. Adjoining Parish Councils were written to separately on 24th August given the opportunity to comment until 30th September 2005 (and were subsequently included on database as Statutory Consultees).
- Questionnaires available at Council Offices
- Questionnaires available at all local libraries
- Electronic questionnaire on website
- A Planning Conference was held on 7th July 2005 to help the scoping exercise for the Core Strategy, Housing DPD and Cliftonville Area Action Plan. The Conference also included a session on the SCI where attendees were asked to consider barriers to consultation, hard to reach groups and the length of consultation periods.

Summary of the main issues raised in those consultations

277 questionnaires were returned - see Appendix 1 for a summary.
Feedback from the Planning Conference can be found in Appendix 2

How those main issues have been addressed in the Statement of Community Involvement

Questionnaires and public meetings have been included in the table in section 4 as appropriate methods of consultation. These were the methods identified in the results of the Councils questionnaire as being favoured by respondents. Since the majority of those with internet access were in favour of on-line consultations, this has also been included in the table in section 4. Paragraph 41 (under the old numbering system) states that hard copies of documents will be available on request, since a large proportion of Thanet's population is elderly and do not have internet access.

The 'Hard to Reach Groups' table was informed by attendees at the planning conference, as can be seen from the note in Appendix 2. The conference session also identified feedback as being important which has also been included in the SCI. The 'How we will be consulting' section states that adverts for consultation periods may be advertised earlier as some delegates were of the opinion that six weeks was not sufficient.

REPRESENTATIONS ON PROPOSALS FOR A DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION) REGULATION 26

A total of 3264 groups and individuals were contacted comprising:

- Members
- Respondents from previous questionnaire
- Statutory Consultees/DPD bodies
- Those who had requested to be kept informed of the LDF process

The questionnaire was also included in a mailshot to those being written to about a simultaneous public consultation on the proposed modifications to the Thanet Local Plan.

The draft SCI and comments form were available at the Council Offices, libraries and on the Councils website. The consultation was advertised by way of an official notice, and a quarter page advert, in the Thanet Gazette and the Thanet Extra dated 17th February 2006. This consultation took place between 17th February and 31st March 2006.

CONSULTEE LISTS

The same databases were used for the consultations under Regulations 25 and 26.

A Local Development Framework database was created from various sources including previous consultations on the Community Strategy, lists of housing/residents associations and those who had requested to be added to our mailing list/ kept informed of progress on the LDF.

Approximately 2500 respondents on a database relating to the emerging Thanet Local Plan were also included in the Regulation 25 and 26 consultations since we were writing to them simultaneously regarding the Proposed Modifications to the Thanet Local Plan, and again to notify of the adoption of the Thanet Local Plan.

These databases are listed in Appendix 3 and are the contacts used for the consultation under Regulation 26. Although the same databases were used for both consultations, more people were contacted under Regulation 26 as the databases included additional people who had responded either to the Regulation 25 consultation, or the proposed modifications to the Thanet Local Plan.

Representations under Regulation 27(2)

72 comments were received from 46 respondents

Of the comments received, 25 were in general support of the draft SCI, 25 raised issues specific to the SCI, 14 raised matters that could not be addressed by the SCI, and 8 were in apparent criticism of the Council in general.

Of the issues raised in specific regard to the SCI, 7 were felt to be appropriate and were acted upon accordingly. The remaining 18 were noted and no action was deemed necessary.

Comments to which action was taken is reflected in the following amendments:

- Paragraphs renumbered to reflect Section numbering
- The words 'and consensus building' removed from first paragraph of Section 4
- The following words added to paragraph 50 (under old numbering system): 'The Council will continue to carry out formal, statutory consultation procedures by way of formal letters of notification, notices in the press, and the availability of documents at deposit points.' This was added in response to a comment that there was no mention of statutory consultation procedures in the SCI.
- Last sentence of paragraph 63 has been deleted due to a comment that it was confusing
- Table 'Tier Level 2' – the words 'and Schedule 2' and 'significant' added as suggested by an objector
- Appendix 1 – 'Sports Council' changed to 'Sport England' and 'Parish Councils' moved to Local Communities section.

Other suggestions, which were noted but not acted upon, included the following:

- The public should be advised through free newspapers when development application are first received (this is already Council procedure, as set out in paragraph 64).
- List of local groups to be included (Appendix 1 outlines why this was felt not to be the case)
- Ensure the community can make informed decisions by guiding them to comprehensive and current documents and other reference resources (sufficient documentation is available, via the Council offices, public libraries and the internet)
- Face to face interviews should be used as an effective means of gauging public opinion (while this method's effectiveness was agreed upon, it is unlikely that resources will be available)
- Some areas have residents who do not have internet access, do not receive free local papers and find it difficult to travel to the library, and that it is important for the council to reach these people (this is already covered in paragraph 60).

Additional comments made that could not be addressed via the SCI involvement included the following:

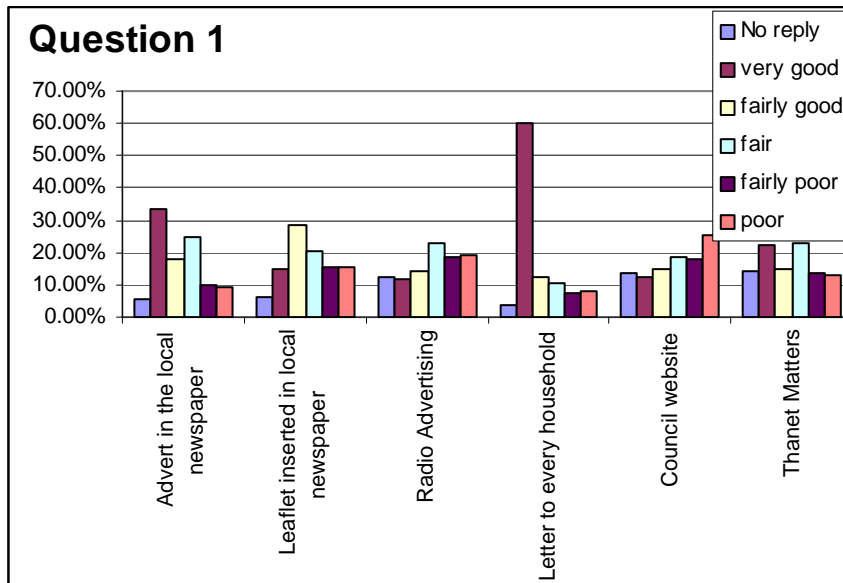
- The future of the Dreamland site in Margate, as well as the development of the Margate Heritage initiative
- Agreements on the need for refurbishment at both the Winter Gardens and the Lido site in Margate.
- Suggestion for improvements to Broadstairs seafront.

Eight comments were general criticism of the Council rather than the SCI itself. These were noted and acknowledged accordingly with respect to the SCI's intentions and limitations thereof.

Comments of support and/or a request to be kept updated with further developments were noted and will be acted upon where appropriate.

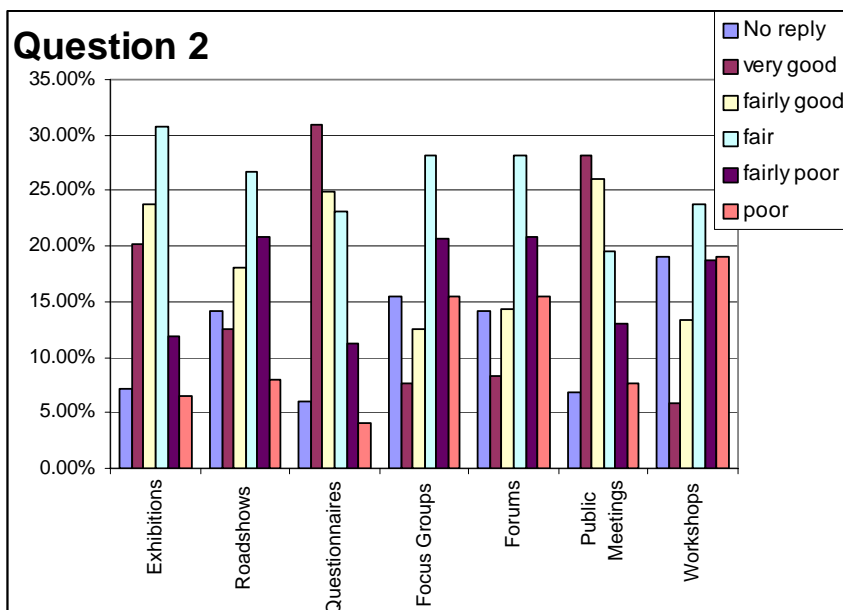
APPENDIX 1 - BE PART OF THE PLAN – SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION OF JULY 2005

Q1 What do you think is the best way of letting people know what is happening in relation to major planning issues



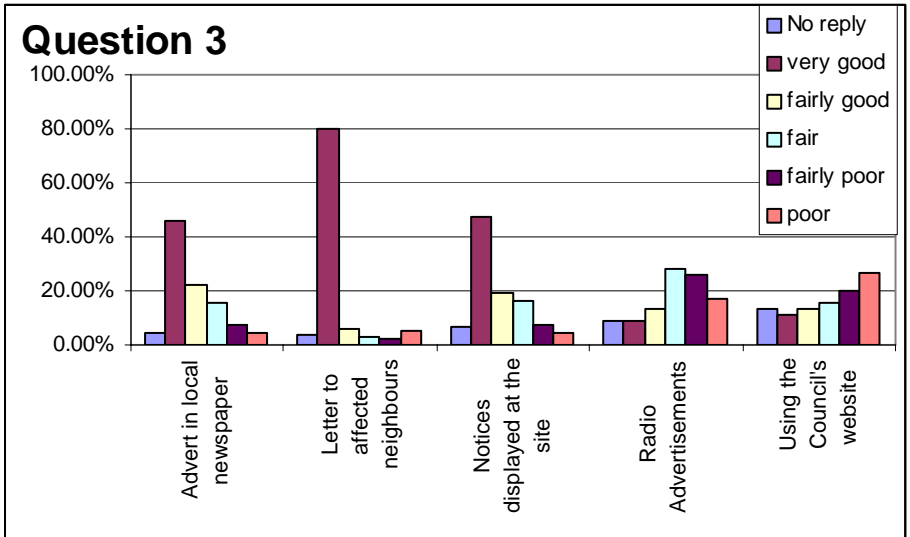
- A letter to every household had the highest response; 60% of respondents said a letter was a very good way and only 15% said a letter was a fairly poor or poor way.
- Local newspapers with either an advert or a leaflet insertion were also popular. 50% of respondents said an advertisement would be fairly or very good and over 40% opted for a leaflet insertion.

Q2 Please take a look at the different methods of consultation and rank according to how good you think they are for getting peoples views.



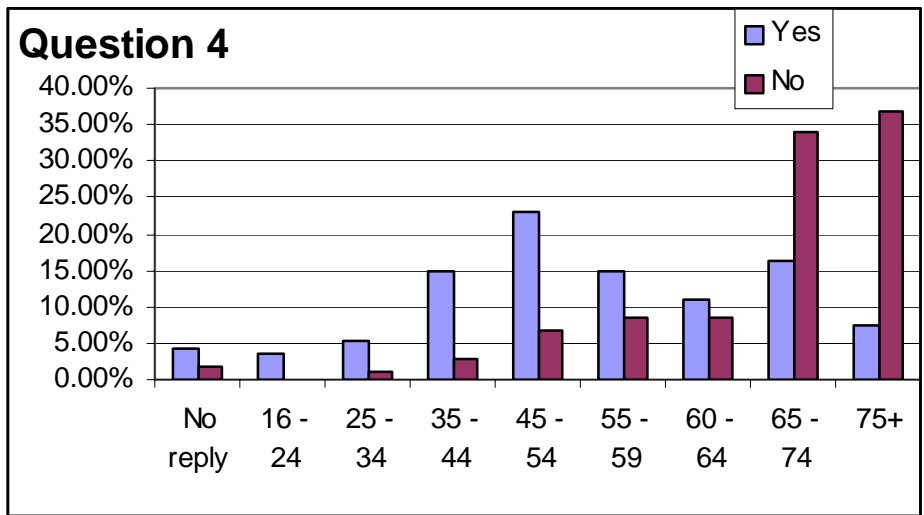
- Questionnaires were the most popular option, more than 50% of respondents thought they were good and one third thought they were very good.
- Public meetings were also favoured, more than 50% of respondents thought they were good.
- For all other options, the majority of respondents recorded fair [3].

Q3 How do you think we should publicise important planning applications.



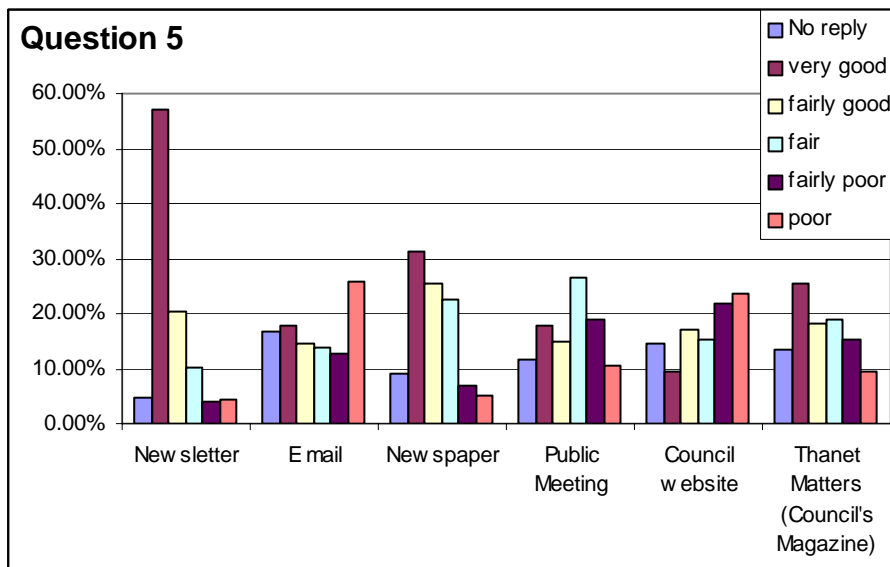
- A letter to affected neighbours was the overwhelming option, 80% of respondents said very good.
- Both adverts in the local newspaper and notices displayed at the site attracted a very good response of more than 40%.

Q4 Do you have access to the internet?



- The majority of respondents under 65 years said they had access to the internet.
- The majority of those with internet access responded positively to electronic consultations

Q5 How would you like us to tell you the results of consultation.



- Newsletters were the most favoured option with more than half of the responses for very good.

APPENDIX 2 - Feedback – SCI section at Planning Conference, 7 July 2005

Sitting three of the conference relating to the Statement of Community Involvement produced some valuable comments and positive ideas to contribute to the councils SCI. Three issues were discussed – barriers to consultation, hard to reach groups and timescale of consultation. The following paragraphs describe just some of the points raised, but all of the comments have been read and will help shape the SCI which should be available for public consultation in October.

Some of the barriers identified at the conference included issues such as lack of relevance to the individual, negative attitudes/'them' and 'us' towards the council, the complexity of the planning system/use of planning jargon and 'consultation fatigue'. Suggestions as to how we can improve our consultation exercises included better advertising/provision of information to get people involved from the beginning, better feedback so that people can see the point of getting involved, and more flexibility with the timing of consultation events (eg evenings or weekends for public meetings/exhibitions etc).

Some of the hard-to-reach groups were identified as being young people, ethnic groups, those with low levels of literacy/education, residents who work outside the district, single parents, disabled and older people. It was also acknowledged that some groups choose not to be consulted. Some of the suggestions to help reach these groups included sending packs/presentations to schools, leaving leaflets at places where some of these people go (eg supermarkets, hospitals, doctors, dentists, community centres, education establishments etc), using newsletters produced by existing groups/noticeboards to provide information and get people interested.

There were differing views on the timescale for consultation. Comments ranged from 6 weeks being sufficient, to a 2-3 week maximum lead into a statutory consultation period, whilst others suggested longer due to groups own meeting cycles. Several groups suggested more time be given for consultation periods during August or Christmas.