

Pre-submission consultation

The Regulation 14 consultation

Neighbourhood planning regulations (Regulation 14) require the draft neighbourhood plan proposal to be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The consultation should last at least 6 weeks. The neighbourhood planning body will need to approve the consultation draft of the plan and that the Regulation 14 consultation takes place.

Prior to the pre-submission consultation, it is sensible to discuss the draft plan with the local planning authority to check if there are any concerns over meeting the basic conditions. This would allow these to be addressed, prior to the consultation.

Pre-submission consultation requirements include publicising the draft plan to people who live, work or run businesses in the area. The publicity must include details of the proposed neighbourhood plan, where and when it may be viewed, and how to make comments on the plan and by what date. In addition, the plan must be sent to the local planning authority. Certain statutory bodies must be consulted, including the county council (if applicable), the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. The local planning authority should be asked to provide a list of contact details for the statutory consultees.

It is also advisable to consult any neighbouring local, town or parish councils, significant landowners, local businesses and local community organisations, such as chambers of commerce, civic societies and local trusts. Anyone on the neighbourhood plan database that has previously been involved should also be consulted.

Many people will not want to read through the whole document, so it is useful to produce a simple leaflet or display boards that set out the main aims and the focus of the policies in the plan. Drop-in centres may be a useful means of allowing people to ask questions or discuss the plan on a one-to-one basis. The draft plan proposal should be uploaded to the neighbourhood plan website. Printed copies should be made available at convenient locations, such as libraries, community centres, council offices and other key public buildings. Copies should be available to send to people who can't access a digital or displayed copy.

Considering representations and modifications

Any comments received by the end of the consultation period must be considered conscientiously by the neighbourhood planning body. All representations need to be considered, but it is legitimate for the neighbourhood plan body to take a different view. Indeed, different representations may demonstrate opposing views. A planning judgement needs to be taken.

A decision will need to be made over whether or not to amend the neighbourhood plan in response to each representation. The decisions on whether or not to amend the plan, and the reasoning behind them, should be recorded, as this information will need to be incorporated into the consultation statement (see later section on the consultation statement).

The neighbourhood planning body will need to agree the modifications and approve the resulting draft of the plan for submission to the local planning authority.

