



The Local Development Framework Explained

A short guide to spatial planning and the way planning policy is made



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Farsi

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French

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Kurdish

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਣਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ, ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ/ਸੀ ਡੀ 'ਤੇ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 'Diversity Team' ਨੂੰ 01642 528830 ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Punjabi

اگر آپ ان معلومات کو کسی بھی اور زبان یا انداز، مثلاً بڑے پرنٹ/آڈیو ٹیپ وغیرہ میں حاصل کرنا چاہیں، تو ڈایورسٹی ٹیم (Diversity Team) کو اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے 01642 528830

Urdu

THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

1. What is it?

1.1. Local Development Frameworks were introduced by the Government in 2004 and will eventually replace the 'old' system of Local Plans. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is not a plan, but a folder of planning documents, forming a single source for all the Local Authority's planning policies.

2. How is it different?

2.1. The new system provides more opportunities for Local Authorities to develop locally relevant, individual policy documents.

2.2. These documents:

- Adopt a wide spatial planning approach. Other local authority departments, local stakeholders and the local community are involved in writing them. They are delivered using different mechanisms, including development management and control.
- Involve the public, interest groups and professionals from the earliest stage of preparation. Then issues can be identified and discussed as soon as possible. This will mean there will be less conflict at later stages.
- Must be underpinned by a comprehensive evidence base. An Annual Monitoring Report is prepared to ensure policies are working as intended.
- Have a Sustainability Appraisal to test the impact they will have on the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area.

2.3. There is a timetable that sets out when documents will be produced and when consultation will take place. This is called the Local Development Scheme.

3. How does the LDF relate to other planning guidance?

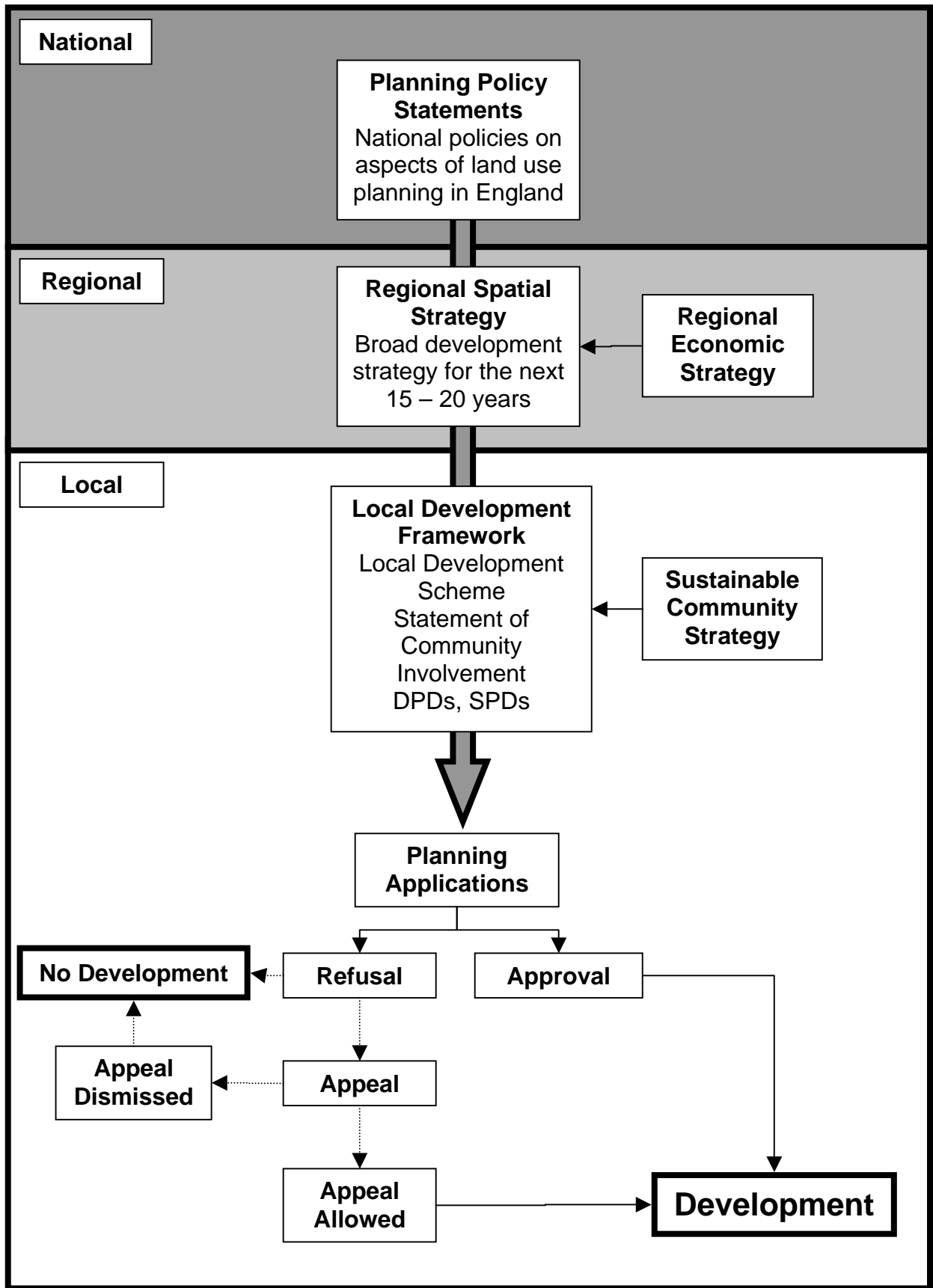
3.1. The Council has to take Policy Planning Policy Statements issued by the Government into account. These set out national planning policy and give guidance on preparing the LDF.

3.2. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out broad planning policy for the region. It is prepared by the North East Assembly. The LDF informs the RSS and must generally conform with it.

3.3. The LDF is the implementation plan for the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy. This is the top-level strategic plan for improving the Borough and local services. It reflects the aspirations of the local community and has been developed through consultation with local residents, local councillors and Stockton Renaissance, the Local Strategic Partnership.

3.4. The diagram below shows the links between national, and regional guidance and the LDF. It also shows the relationship with the LDF and proposals for development through the planning application system.

How the Existing Planning System Works at Local, Regional and National Level



4. What is in the Local Development Framework?

4.1. The LDF Folder will contain a number of documents. These include:

- **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

This is the timetable for the preparation of documents. It outlines which local development documents will be produced, in what order and when.

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

This explains to how and when local communities and stakeholders can be involved in the preparation of LDF documents. Stockton Borough's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in March 2006.

- **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

This is produced every year, to show whether the Council is keeping to its timetable for the preparation of documents, and to show how its policies are performing. If the policies are not achieving the required results, then a review of the plan may be necessary.

- **Core Strategy**

This is the key strategic local development document, which sets out the long-term vision, objectives and policies that will guide proposals in other local development documents. It will set out the general pattern of development within the Borough, but will not go into detail or allocate specific sites for development.

- **Site allocation development plan documents (DPDs)**

These are the plans that will identify sites for specific land uses, based on the suitability and availability of land. Stockton Borough's main site allocation plan is the **Regeneration Development Plan Document**. This will allocate sites for uses such as housing, industry and

employment, services and community facilities. The **Environment Development Plan Document** will set out Borough wide policies and sites concerning the built and natural environment, including green wedges, open spaces, nature conservation and the historic environment.

- **Area Action Plans (AAPs)**

These are part of the Development Plan and are more detailed, covering smaller specific parts of the Borough where there is likely to be significant change, or conservation is needed. The **Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan (YEAAP)** is the only such document proposed at the moment.

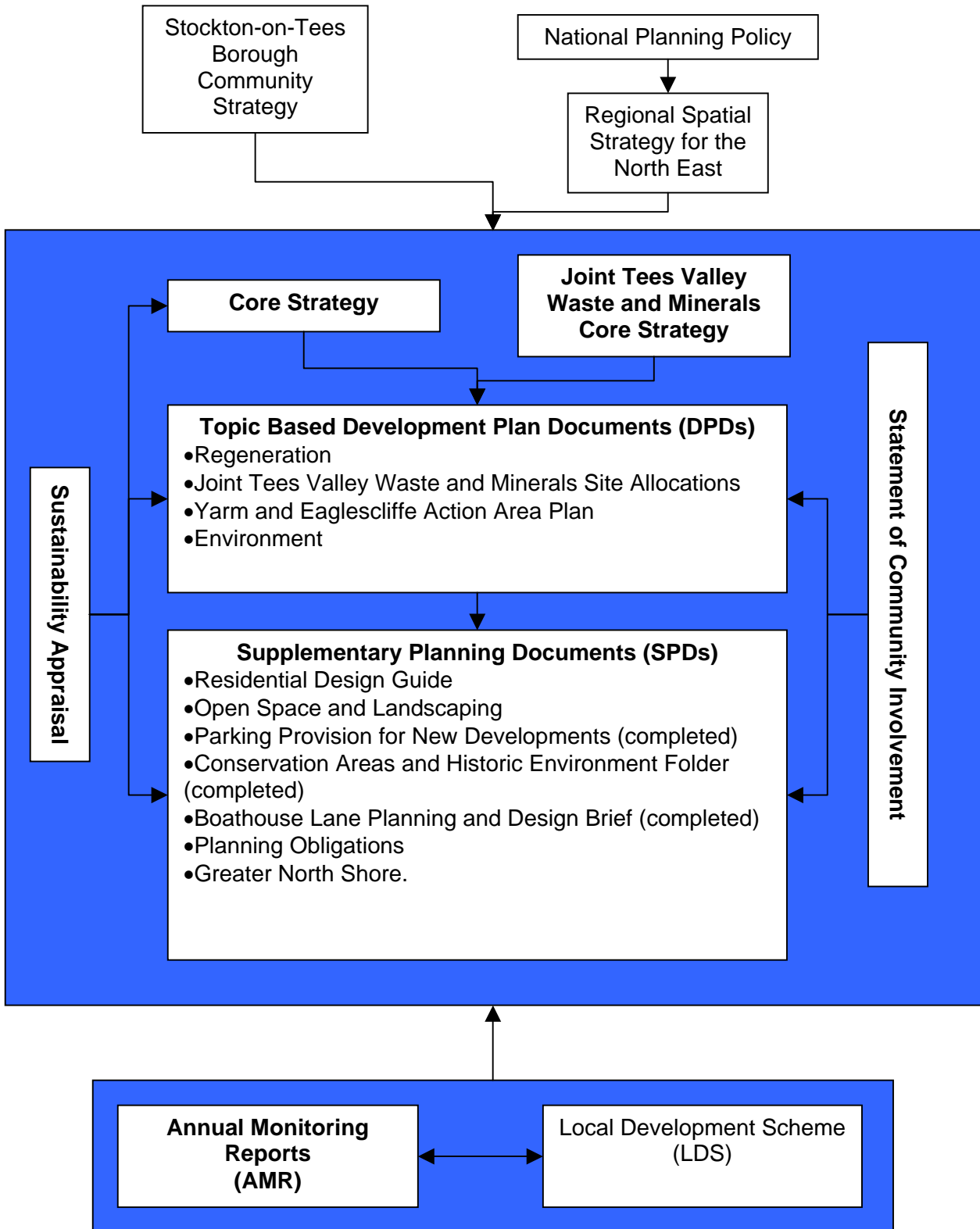
- **Adopted Proposals Map**

This is a map which illustrates all the policies set out in development plan documents in a way that can be understood by local communities and stakeholders alike. It has to be revised every time a new development plan document is adopted.

- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)**

These are intended to provide detail to policies in development plan documents, and provide additional guidance on how a particular policies will be used. They do not, however, have the status of development plans, which form the starting point for planning decisions.

4.2. The diagram overleaf illustrates the relationship between the various documents which make up the LDF.



What are the stages of preparation?

4.3. Development Plan Documents

Development Plan Documents go through the following stages:

- **Issues and Options Stage**

This is the first phase, which involves identifying specific issues that affect the Borough, and looking at any options which are available to deal them. We aim to involve the key stakeholders and organisations in this process, and also give the general public an opportunity to let us know what they think.

- **Preferred Options Stage**

This is the phase when, having considered the views of others, we put forward our preferred options and policies for dealing with relevant matters. However, it is still open for others to comment on all options considered, and to put forward other options, if they think we haven't considered something. There is a six week statutory period within which comments can be made.

- **Submission Stage**

This is when we have considered comments made at the preferred options stage, and have finalised the document which we think will best meet the Borough's needs. We submit this to the Secretary of State. At the same time as we submit the plan, there is a six week period when representations can be made

- **Independent Examination**

The submission of the plan is followed by an independent examination when an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate looks at the soundness of the plan. This usually takes place about six months after the plan has been submitted. The Inspector looks at the soundness of the plan, to make sure that public consultation has been properly carried out, the plan doesn't conflict with national planning guidance,

the plan is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, and best meets the needs of the Borough. The Inspector will also consider any representation made by the public, although these should show that the plan will be “unsound” if the changes requested are not included in the plan.

- **Binding Report**

Within six months of the examination, the Inspector will send a report to the Council. This says whether or not the plan is sound and recommends, where appropriate, that changes be made. We have to make these changes – the Inspector’s report is binding on the Council.

- **Adoption**

Once the changes requested by the Inspector have been included in the plan, it will be adopted and become Council policy.

4.4. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

These are not statutory documents, but provide further guidance for policies and proposals. Therefore, these stages leading up to adoption are simpler. There is no examination or Inspector’s report. The stages in preparation are as follows:

- Preparation of a draft SPD
- Public consultation, which lasts for six weeks, during which time the public can comment on the proposals
- Consideration of comments by the Council, and amendment of the SPD, as appropriate
- Adoption of the SPD.

5. Sustainability Appraisals

5.1. The Council must carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of all LDF documents to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects. All plans have to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

6. Appropriate Assessment

6.1. There is also a requirement to carry out an Appropriate Assessment of plans and policies to ensure that sites of European importance for nature conservation will not be significantly affected.