

Subject:	Statement of Community Involvement		
Date of Meeting:	12 March 2015		
Report of:	Executive Director Environment, Development & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Carly Dockerill	Tel: 29-2382
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek adoption of the new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to replace the currently adopted 2006 version. The SCI sets out the procedures and processes for consultation and engagement in the planning process.
- 1.2 The draft SCI was previously agreed for consultation at committee on 13th November 2014. The draft SCI was subject to a period of eight weeks public consultation 20th November 2014 to 16th January 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the Committee adopts the Statement of Community Involvement 2015 subject to minor editorial or grammatical changes to be agreed with the Director of Environment, Development and Housing.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the consultation and engagement that will be used in preparing planning policy documents, supplementary/supporting documents and in determining planning applications. It explains the statutory requirements that the Council must meet at each stage and the additional consultation that will be undertaken in addition to these minimum requirements. The purpose of the document is to ensure that residents and stakeholders have increased certainty over the type of engagement they can expect within the planning process and the ways that they can get involved.
- 3.2 A draft SCI was published for public consultation for an eight-week period ending on 16 January 2015. During the consultation, responses were received from eight respondents. The detailed representations are set out in Appendix A to this report which also includes officer responses and the amendments that have been made to the SCI to address the consultation feedback.
- 3.3 The final version of the SCI, incorporating any changes as a result of the consultation, is appended at Appendix B to this report. The key changes to the document compared to the consultation draft version are highlighted for clarity.

These include:

- Updating the SCI to reflect amendments issued 9 February 2015 by the government to speed up the neighbourhood planning process.
- Listing of Arun District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority as 'Duty to Co-operate consultees
- Updating of the SCI in line with the emerging 'Brighton & Hove City Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019

3.4 Once adopted by the members, the SCI will replace the 2006 SCI and will be used as the framework for future consultation and engagement across the planning service.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The preferred option and the recommendation of this report is to adopt the SCI 2015, to replace the SCI adopted in 2006.

4.2 The alternative option is to continue to use the SCI 2006. This is not recommended as the SCI 2006 is now out-of-date due to changes in the planning process and regulations. It is also an opportunity to introduce new methods of consultation due to the availability of new types of media. The document has been amended to be more concise and accessible. The new SCI, that is the subject of this report, addresses these issues and has now been through a formal public consultation period.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 There is no longer a statutory requirement to consult on the SCI; however, it was considered good practice to do so. Following approval to consult by committee on 13th November 2014 consultation took place between 20th November 2014 and 16th January 2015. This was for eight weeks instead of the usual six weeks to take account of the Christmas holidays.

5.2 In terms of the consultation, over one thousand planning policy database contacts were either emailed or written to inviting comments on the Draft Revised SCI. Contacts ranged from statutory and general consultees including those stakeholders who have previously engaged in planning policy preparation or have requested to be notified of further planning policy publications.

5.3 The SCI was made available on the dedicated Planning Policy pages of the council website; the council's consultation portal and made available for inspection at the city deposit points (customer services centres and libraries).

5.4 Eight representations were received during this time period of which three stated that they had no specific comments to make. Five representations were therefore considered in finalising the SCI for adoption.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The SCI is a legally required document which sets out how a local planning authority proposes to engage with stakeholders and residents in the development plan-making process and planning application process.
- 6.2 An up to date revised SCI provides clarity on how engagement will be undertaken with partners, communities and individuals and that minimum requirements are met.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The costs of updating the Statement of Community Involvement have been funded from existing resources within the Planning Policy revenue budget. It is anticipated that there will not be any additional costs to the council arising from the adoption of the revised Statement.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford

Date: 04/02/15

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The requirement for a local planning authority to adopt a statement of community involvement ("SCI") was introduced by section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. That section provides that a SCI is a statement of the authority's policy as to the involvement, in the exercise of the authority's planning policy and development control functions, "of persons who appear to the authority to have an interest in matters relating to development in their area". As stated in the report there is no statutory requirement to consult on a draft SCI but it is considered good practice to do so.
- 7.3 It is not considered that any adverse human rights implications arise from the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward

Date: 06/02/15

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The Council has already adopted a Statement of Community Involvement 2006, which encourages effective social inclusion for all groups to influence the policy-making agenda. DPDs are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). It is intended that the revised SCI will help to the planning service to engage effectively with different sectors of the community including those hard to reach groups.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 Sustainability considerations are central to the new planning system. Each local development document requires an integrated sustainability appraisal.

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.6 The SCI will help to deliver the priorities of the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 citywide.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. SCI Consultation Statement
2. Final Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2015

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None