

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>22 March 2017</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Statement of Community Involvement</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Director of Regeneration &amp; Planning</b>

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<b>Ward(s)</b>	All
<b>Purpose</b>	For Members to authorise the publication of a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for public consultation with the local community and other stakeholders for an 8 week period.
<b>Contact</b>	Matt Hitchen, Senior Strategy & Commissioning Officer (Planning Policy) 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne Tel no: (01323) 415253 E-mail: <a href="mailto:matt.hitchen@eastbourne.gov.uk">matt.hitchen@eastbourne.gov.uk</a>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To approve the Statement of Community Involvement for publication for an 8 week consultation period to receive representations and comments.</li><li>2. To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member to make minor amendments before the commencement of the consultation period.</li></ol>

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council's approach to consulting the local community and other stakeholders on planning matters within the local planning authority boundary.
- 1.2 The Council's existing SCI is now considered to be out of date as a result of changes in legislation and national policy since it was adopted in 2006, and a new SCI is being prepared to guide public consultation in the preparation of a new Local Plan for the town.
- 1.3 Before the new SCI can be adopted, it should be published for consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. It is proposed that public consultation on the draft SCI should take place for an 8 week period between 24 March and 19 May 2017, in line with the principles set out in the draft SCI. The Draft SCI is provided as Appendix 1.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications. It is a legal requirement that any consultation on Local Plans is undertaken in accordance with the adopted SCI.
- 2.2 The current SCI was adopted in 2006, with minor amendments made in 2009 as a result in changes in legislation. This SCI was used to co-ordinate extensive community and stakeholder consultation on a number of planning policy documents that have since been adopted, including the Core Strategy, Town Centre Local Plan and the Employment Land Local Plan.
- 2.3 The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and changes to the regulations governing the production of Local Plans means that the current SCI is now out of date.
- 2.4 The Council is embarking on a new round of plan making to replace existing planning policies through the production of a new Local Plan. A new, up to date SCI is being produced to ensure that the local community and other stakeholders are provided with opportunities to have their input into the development of the Plan.
- 2.5 The new SCI should be finalised and adopted before formal consultation on the new Local Plan commences. The Issues & Options consultation is scheduled for autumn 2017, meaning that the new SCI should be adopted by Full Council in July 2017, following the outcome of the consultation.

## **3.0 Issues**

- 3.1 In order to ensure that effective and efficient consultation is carried out for the new Local Plan, a survey was carried out in late 2016. The Community Survey on Participation in Planning Consultations asked local residents, businesses and other stakeholders about their previous experience of participating in planning consultations and how they would like to be consulted in the future. Although the respondents to the survey were not representative of the Eastbourne community, particularly in terms of age profile, the survey did identify some issues that need to be addressed as part of the new SCI.
- 3.2 In addition, the new SCI takes into account past experience of consultation, best practice, information about the geo-demographic profile of the town, and the results of the Residents Consultation Survey (2015).

- 3.3 The issues that should be addressed in the proposed approach to consultation in the SCI are:
- The promotion of consultation across all sectors of the community, particularly amongst age groups and neighbourhoods that do not usually participate, with additional effort to engage 'hard to reach' groups.
  - A new approach to the use of email as data suggests that people prefer to be contacted and respond via this method.
  - Being clearer about how plan making will affect local residents as they mainly want to be involved in local decision making when the issue is one that concerns them.
  - Improving feedback on consultation and the process for showing how comments have been taken on-board.
  - Using consultation and engagement as a means to inform residents about planning issues as well as seek their views.
  - Ensuring that consultation material is easily understandable and accessible.
- 3.4 The draft SCI includes a summary overview of the planning system in order to help familiarise the community with the planning process, and also provides details on consultation within the plan making process (planning policy), development management (determining planning applications), and community-led planning (neighbourhood plans).

#### **4.0 Plan-Making**

- 4.1 Within the plan making process, there are three types of plan that will be produced by Eastbourne Borough Council:
- Local Plan
  - Supplementary Planning Document
  - Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule
- 4.2 The timetable for the production of these planning policy documents is identified within the Council's Local Development Scheme, which was adopted in February 2017.
- 4.3 The Draft SCI sets out the stages in the preparation in each of these plans that there will be engagement and consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. As regulations limit the types of representation that can be submitted at certain stages, the draft SCI sets different consultation periods for different stages. This includes 8 week consultations where any type of feedback is welcome, and 6 weeks where consultation is more technical and representations are limited to only addressing issues of 'soundness'.
- 4.4 The SCI sets out the basic consultation standards will be applied as a

minimum in all consultation on planning policy document. These are:

- Use of the on-line Consultation Portal to host consultation material and enable responses, either directly via the website or by downloading comment forms that can be uploaded, emailed or posted back
- Direct notifications to organisations and individuals through the Local Plan Consultation Database and the 'GovDelivery' email subscribers list
- Putting paper copies of documentation on deposit at 1 Grove Road
- Putting notices in the local paper to advertise consultation
- The promotion of consultation by local Councillors within their wards, especially in areas where there tends to be a lack of engagement.

4.5 In addition, an email newsletter will be sent out on a quarterly basis to everyone on the consultation database and 'GovDelivery' subscribers to provide updates on preparation of planning policy documents and when consultation is expected to be undertaken.

4.6 The SCI also identifies additional consultation methods and approaches will be used on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and scale of the consultation.

4.7 Feedback on the consultation, including responses to the representations received and how they will be addressed in the next stage of plan making, will be published on the website and promoted via the quarterly email newsletter.

## **5.0 Development Management**

5.1 The draft SCI sets out the procedures that the Council undertakes in the process of determining planning applications. Opportunities exist for the community and stakeholders to be informed and consulted on development proposals at each of the following stages:

- Pre-application consultation
- Planning application
- Planning appeals.

5.2 The methods that the Council uses to publicise applications and consult the community, which exceed the minimum requirements set out by legislation, are as follows:

- Neighbour Notification Letters
- Site Notice
- Public Notice in the local press
- Publication on the Council's website

5.3 The deadline for submitting comments on a planning application will be set out in the publicity accompanying the planning application. This will be not

less than 21 days, or 14 days where a notice is published in a newspaper.

## **6.0 Consultation**

6.1 It is proposed that public consultation on the draft SCI should take place for an 8 week period between 24 March and 19 May 2017.

6.2 Consultation on the SCI will follow the principles set out in the draft document. In addition to the basic standards, it is considered that the following additional methods outlined in the document are appropriate for consultation on the SCI:

- Use of social media to promote the consultation
- Production of leaflets/posters to advertise the consultation
- Consultation with young people through existing groups and forums
- The provision of summary documentation
- On-line videos/presentations hosted on the website
- Engaging community organisations/groups

6.3 Following the consultation period, a summary of representations will be prepared and a revised Statement of Community Involvement will be presented to Local Plan Steering Group for endorsement, followed by submission to Cabinet and then Full Council for approval and adoption in July 2017.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **7.1 Legal Implications**

7.1.1 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that a Local Planning Authority must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement. The document is also being prepared in order to secure compliance with Regulation 13 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and with regard to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.1.2 Regulation 12 requires that before the SCI is adopted, a statement setting out details of those consulted when preparing the SCI, together with a summary of the main issues raised, must be prepared. Any relevant issues raised during the consultation will need to be addressed in the SCI. *Date of Legal Advice: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 - Legal Ref 6092-EBC-JCS.*

### **7.2 Financial Implications**

7.2.1 There are no financial implications to the Council as a direct result of this report. The cost of the consultation and publication of the SCI and the requirements of the SCI for future consultation will be met from within the service budget. Financial resources will be taken into consideration when

determining the specific approach to consultation on a planning policy document.

### 7.3 Human Resource Implications

7.3.1 Officers in the Regeneration & Planning Policy team will manage the consultation arrangements for the SCI, and the collection and processing of representations received. Officer resources will be taken into consideration when determining the specific approach to consultation on a planning policy document.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

8.1 There is a need to produce a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) ahead of the new round of plan making as the existing SCI is out of date due to changes in legislation and national policy.

8.2 Past experience, best practice, the geo-demographic profile of the town and results from the Resident Consultation Survey (2015) and Community Survey on Participation in Planning Consultation (2016) have identified issues that have been addressed within the SCI.

8.3 Before the new SCI can be adopted, it requires public consultation. This is proposed to take place using the consultation methods and approaches identified within the document. Following consultation, comments will be considered and adoption is anticipated for July 2017.

8.4 Cabinet are requested to authorise consultation on the draft SCI with the local community and other stakeholders for an 8 week period between 24 March and 19 May 2017.

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### Background Papers:

- Eastbourne Statement of Community Involvement (2006, amended 2009)
- Community Survey on Participation in Planning Consultation (EBC, 2016)
- National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)
- Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012
- Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

To inspect or obtain copies of the background paper, please refer to the contact officer listed above.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Draft Statement of Community Involvement**