

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 28 October 2019

Title: Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Councillor Emily O'Brien, Cabinet member for Planning

Ward(s): All wards that lie wholly or partially outside of the South Downs National Park

Purpose of report: To seek Cabinet approval to publish the Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement for a consultation period of 8 weeks.

Decision type: Budget and policy framework

Officer recommendation(s): To approve the publication of the Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement for a consultation period of 8 weeks.

Reasons for recommendations: To ensure that progress is made in reviewing and updating the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in accordance with national legislation.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Involving communities is an essential element of a responsible, inclusive and democratic planning system. The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out our approach to involving the local community and stakeholders in planning issues. This includes the handling of major planning applications. It is intended to 'signpost' opportunities for anyone who wishes to make a contribution to planning for the future outside of the South Downs National Park.
- 1.2 Our current SCI was adopted in July 2011. Since then, the Localism Act 2011

and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 have been introduced. Amendments have also been made to the Town and Country Planning Regulations and a new National Planning Policy Framework has come into force. These legislative changes mean that there is a need to review and update our SCI. They also present an opportunity to review the most effective ways to consult the community based on recent experience.

2.0 The Consultation Document

2.1 The Draft Revised SCI has been produced for public consultation and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It updates the Council's adopted SCI in order to reflect the changes that have occurred to the planning system since the current version was adopted in 2011.

2.2 The consultation document sets out how and when the Council will provide opportunities for the community to contribute to the planning process, including local plan preparation and the consideration of planning applications. It is split into four main sections as follows:

- Overview of the Planning System
- Plan Making
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Development Management

2.3 The 'Overview of the Planning System' is a new section within the SCI and explains the planning process and the District Council's role as local planning authority. This section has been included in response to feedback from Town and Parish Councils and an associated explanation of the planning term '*material considerations*' is included at Appendix 2 of the document.

2.4 The 'Plan Making' section concerns the preparation of planning policy documents, including Local Plans, and describes what documents we will consult on, who will be consulted, the methods that will be used to undertake this consultation, and the stages of the production process when consultation will be undertaken

2.5 'Neighbourhood Planning' is another significant new section within the SCI. It explains how the District Council will support Town and Parish Councils undertaking neighbourhood plans, in accordance with our new duties under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

2.6 Finally, the 'Development Management' section describes how people can find out about planning applications submitted in their area, how and when they can submit comments, and how they can speak at Planning Committee.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 The Draft Revised SCI will be published for an 8 week consultation period between **11 November 2019 and 5 January 2020**. The consultation will be publicised on the Council's web site and hard copies of the document will be available to read at Southover House and local libraries.
- 3.2 All representations made on the SCI will be acknowledged and taken into consideration when preparing the final version of the document. It is anticipated that the results of the consultation will be reported back to Cabinet on 10 February 2020, along with recommendations for any amendments required to the document. Once these have been approved, the SCI will go up to Full Council for adoption on 24 February 2020.

4.0 Corporate plan and council policies

- 4.1 The LDC Corporate Plan firmly supports the importance of community involvement. Working together with other authorities, organisations and the residents are viewed as a fundamental necessity for achieving the goals.

5.0 Financial appraisal

- 5.1 There are not considered to be any financial implications for the General Fund base budget. The cost of the consultation and publication of the SCI 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.

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 S18 of Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that the local planning authority must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 provide the processes to which the local authority must adhere associated with the preparation, consultation and adoption of the SCI. s10A of the 2012 Regulations compels a local authority to review its SCI every five years.

Significant changes in legislation have taken place since the last review of the SCI and therefore a review is required and justified to update the document.

7.0 Risk management implications

7.1 Legislation requires that Local Plans are prepared in conformity with an adopted SCI and an amendment to the Town and Country Planning Regulations in 2017 requires local planning authorities to review their SCI every five years. As the current SCI was adopted in 2011, the Council needs to approve an up-to-date version of the SCI prior to commencing consultation on a review of the Lewes District Local Plan Part 1 (Joint Core Strategy). Without an adopted, up-to-date SCI in place, the preparation of a new Local Plan which meets all the necessary legislative requirements will not be possible.

8.0 Equality analysis

8.1 The Draft Revised SCI stresses the need to facilitate equal access to participation in local planning decisions. The document presents a wide range of methods that can be used to engage the community, including groups with protected characteristics.

8.2 The Equality and Fairness Analysis states that the SCI is focused on strengthening the procedures for community involvement. These procedures are not expected to have any negative direct impacts on groups with protected characteristics. However, the SCI will be subject to public consultation following approval from Cabinet.

9.0 Sustainability implications

9.1 There are no identified sustainability implications, although strengthening the procedures for community involvement will help to enable thriving communities in accordance with the third pillar of the Council's Sustainability Policy 2018.

10 Appendices

- Appendix 1 - The Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement

11 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- Lewes Statement of Community Involvement (2017) EBC SCI2017
<https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/?assetdet6489524d-f1f5-4d4c-8362-fee79affbb2a=262416>
- National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2018)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733637/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_ac

[cessible version.pdf](#)

- Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made>
- Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/contents/enacted>
- Localism Act (2011)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>
- The Equality and Fairness Analysis for SCI (2019)
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

To inspect or obtain copies of the background papers, please contact the officer listed above.