

**CABINET
14 MARCH 2023**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT : STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - REGULATORY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER : PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

COUNCIL PRIORITY : PEOPLE FIRST / SUSTAINABILITY / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To consider the revised draft of the Statement of Community Involvement and agree that it is published for public consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Council's current Statement of Community Involvement should be revised and replaced having regard to the factors outlined in this report.
- 2.2. That subject to recommendation 2.1, the revised draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as attached as Appendix A to this report, be noted and approved for a six week public consultation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Officers consider that the SCI should be updated to reflect the change in emphasis from preparing the local plan to its implementation, particularly through masterplanning.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. To determine, following a review, that there is no requirement to revise and replace the Council's current SCI. This option is not recommended for the reasons set out below.
- 4.2. To produce a revised draft SCI with different content or requirements to those set out in Appendix A. This option is not recommended. Officers consider the attached draft contains an appropriate framework of measures to ensure effective engagement with the community on planning matters. This is a consultation document and any comments or suggestions received in response to the proposed consultation can be taken into account prior to finalising the document.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The Executive Members and Deputy Executive Members for Community Engagement and Planning and Transport have been given the opportunity to comment on the draft revised SCI. No comments have been received.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a Key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 23 December 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will consult the local community in preparing local planning documents, in undertaking relevant consultations for neighbourhood plans and in consultations for planning applications.
- 7.2. The SCI was last updated in 2020 and adopted by the Council on 21 July 2020. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 introduced a requirement that a review of an SCI must be completed every five years, starting from the date of adoption.
- 7.3. Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph reference [ID 61-071-20190315](#)) states that a local planning authority may review and update their SCI at the same time as reviewing and updating a plan to reflect what action is taken to involve the community in any change to the plan. It is considered that the change of focus towards the implementation of the plan is an appropriate time to review the SCI.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. A Statement of Community Involvement was first published by the Council in 2006 and has been reviewed on a number of occasions. The changes made in the last review in 2020 were made to acknowledge the ongoing changes in technology and in particular to reflect the changes to public consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 8.2. Following the adoption of the Local Plan in November 2022, officers have reviewed the SCI and recommend that it is revised to change its emphasis, away from local plan preparation to how we will engage the community in the implementation of the allocated strategic sites. A new section has been included in the SCI which sets out how we might consult the community in the preparation of the masterplans for the strategic sites.
- 8.3. It is proposed that local community groups, Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Planning Groups, developers and their agents should be directly consulted on the proposed changes to the SCI. The consultation document will be made available for six weeks on the Council's website and those organisations mentioned above will receive notification of the consultation. It is proposed that consultation will take place after the May election period.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under the Terms of Reference for Cabinet, paragraph 5.6.18 of the Constitution states that the Cabinet should exercise the Council's functions as Local Planning Authority except where functions are reserved by law to the responsibility of the Council or

delegated to the Service Director – Regulatory. The SCI does not form part of the Council’s Policy Framework as set out in Paragraph 4.2 of the Constitution.

- 9.2. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended, require that a review of a Statement of Community Involvement must be completed every five years.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The costs of running the consultation with key stakeholders for this draft Statement of Community Involvement will be covered by existing staff and within existing budgets.
- 10.2. Future consultations which will use the SCI will either be covered by existing budgets, or where they are site specific, they will be undertaken by the developer.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are no risk implications identified in this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix B. The SCI has identified a number of groups within the community which tend not to engage with local planning issues and consultations. These groups include working age people, people with disabilities, black and ethnic minority groups, young people and gypsy and traveller communities. Work will continue with the Policy and Community Engagement Team to encourage these groups to participate in planning consultations.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. Consultation for the draft SCI will be undertaken by existing staff. Future consultations which are undertaken will also be undertaken within existing resources.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. Appendix A – Revised draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation – March 2023

16.2. Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment for the revised draft Statement of Community Involvement – March 2023

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 [Statement of Community Involvement, July 2020](#)