

**CABINET
19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT : STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – ADOPTION

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - REGULATORY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: PLANNING AND TRANSPORT – RUTH BROWN

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

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To consider the responses received on the draft of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) during public consultation and approve the subsequent amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the consultation responses are noted.
- 2.2. That subject to recommendation 2.1, the amendments to the draft SCI are approved and that the SCI, attached as Appendix A is adopted.
- 2.3. That any minor amendments to the SCI, such as typographical errors, additional statutory consultees, legislation changes, are delegated to the Service Director – Regulatory in consultation with the relevant Executive Members.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The SCI sets out how the Council consults with the local community in preparing, masterplans for the strategic sites, strategic planning documents and in determining planning applications. It also sets out guidelines for those communities involved in neighbourhood planning.

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 as the SCI needs to be updated to reflect current consultation methods.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

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

- 5.2. The draft SCI was approved for public consultation by Cabinet on 14 March 2023. Public consultation took place between 11 May and 27 June 2023. Local community groups, Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Planning Groups, developers and their agents were directly consulted on the proposed changes to the SCI.

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 masterplans for the strategic development sites, 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 Local Plan is an appropriate time to review the SCI.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Following the adoption of the Local Plan in November 2022, officers reviewed the SCI and recommended to Cabinet that the SCI was 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. The draft SCI for public consultation included a new section setting out how we might consult the community in the preparation of the masterplans for the strategic sites.
- 8.2. Thirteen responses were received to the consultation, which can be viewed on the [website](#). In response to the consultation, a number of amendments to the SCI are proposed:
- Minor amendments throughout the SCI to make it clear that the types of community organisations who are consulted for strategic planning consultations;
 - Include, as appendices, the lists of statutory consultees for both strategic planning and planning application consultations;
 - Delete the references to the Council's Area Committees and replace these with the details for the new Area Forums;
 - Minor amendments to accurately reflect the opening hours for the libraries; and
 - Additional text to refer back to the Council's Constitution for planning applications being considered by Planning Committee.

- 8.3. One of the representations made observations about our online consultation software and the format of the consultation documents. Whilst the SCI sets out how we consult rather than the format of the website and online consultation software, officers consider that these are valid issues for consideration and will work with our software suppliers to improve how people can access the consultation documents.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under the Terms of Reference for Cabinet, [paragraph 5.7.18 of the Constitution](#) states that the Cabinet should “*exercise the Authority’s functions as Local Planning Authority and to receive reports on: strategic planning matters, applications for, approval/ designation, consultations/referendums revocation (or recommend revocation of) neighbourhood plans, Article 4 Directions and orders, (except to the extent that those functions are by law 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.
- 9.3. Local planning authorities have discretion about how they inform communities and other interested parties about planning applications. [Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#) sets out the mandatory statutory requirements for applications for publication of applications for planning permission.
- 9.4. [Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (as amended) provides that local authorities must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement which must set out the local authority’s policies for involving interested parties in matters relating to development in their area.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. 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 Future consultations which are undertaken will also be undertaken within existing resources.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1. Appendix A –Statement of Community Involvement – amended September 2023
- 16.2. Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment for the revised Statement of Community Involvement – March 2023

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 [Statement of Community Involvement – draft for consultation: Cabinet report – March 2023 Minute 176](#)
- 18.2 [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)
- 18.3. [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2017](#)