

REPORT TO: Cabinet

9 January 2019

LEAD OFFICER: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Member agreement for the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to be published for consultation purposes. This is prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council and sets out the approach to community engagement in planning matters.
2. This is not a key decision because it responds to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Regulations, setting out the way in which communities and stakeholders will be provided with an opportunity to engage in planning matters. It was first published in the June 2018 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Cabinet agrees:
 - (a) the draft Statement of Community Involvement (attached at Appendix 1) for consultation purposes;
 - (b) that the consultation period will take place for six weeks between Monday 4 February and Monday 18 March 2019;
 - (c) that the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development is granted delegated authority, in liaison with the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, to make any editing changes identified prior to publication for consultation.

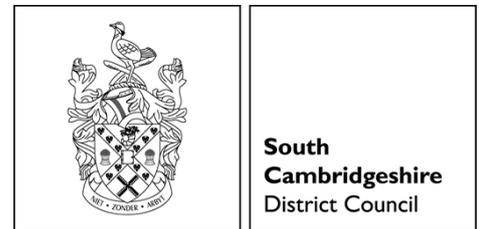
Reasons for Recommendations

4. This report presents the draft SCI for consultation purposes, identifying the points at which there will be an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to get involved in the various parts of the planning process. There is no mandatory requirement for consultation, but it is recommended that the draft SCI is made available for comment to ensure that the needs and aspirations of communities and stakeholders are understood and taken into account in finalising the document.

Background

5. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) introduced the requirement for local authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement. The current SCI for South Cambridgeshire District Council was adopted in 2010, and the Cambridge City SCI was adopted in November 2013. Short addenda to both documents were adopted during 2018, setting out the approach of both Councils to providing support to Parish Councils (Neighbourhood Forums within Cambridge) that are preparing Neighbourhood Plans.
6. The SCI sets out how the public will have an opportunity to engage in the planning process in Greater Cambridge. The SCI describes how the public, businesses,

interest groups and individuals within the local authority areas can get involved in the creation of local planning policy and the planning application process aiming at shaping where we live, work and trade.



7. The draft SCI gives an introduction to the overall planning process, and then moves into detail about how stakeholders can get involved in the preparation of plans including Local Plans (which includes Area Action Plans), Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans. A further section identifies the mechanisms by which stakeholders will be provided an opportunity to engage in the planning application process. Finally, an overview of the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan or Order is provided, followed by the broad support available to community groups that are preparing such documents.
8. The SCI is drafted to reflect the requirements of planning regulations, and provides examples where the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) may, if resources permit, use methods of engagement that move beyond the regulatory requirements. It is important that the SCI does not commit the LPAs to actions that cannot be resourced in all cases, as this could then call into jeopardy decisions and actions taken. This does not, however, preclude the Council from choosing to use additional mechanisms to increase community engagement as and when it is considered appropriate to do so.
9. There is no mandatory requirement for consultation on a draft SCI however, in the spirit of ensuring meaningful engagement in the planning process, it is proposed that a consultation period is undertaken for six weeks from Monday 4 February to Monday 18 March 2019. The consultation period will be carried out in accordance with the requirements for Supplementary Planning Documents (see table 2 of the draft document attached at Appendix 1), drawing largely on electronic communication and engagement methods as is appropriate to a document of this nature. Representations received will be considered, with any subsequent amendments identified. A summary of these representations and the responses made, in addition to the final version of the SCI will be brought back to Members for adoption in due course.

Considerations

10. Each Local Planning Authority must prepare and maintain a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and new regulations that came into force on 6 April 2018 require that this must be reviewed at least every five years from the date of adoption. The existing SCI was adopted more than five years ago and must now be reviewed.
11. The SCI sets out the broad parameters that will be put in place to guide community engagement in the overall planning process. It is important that the SCI does not commit the authority to using engagement mechanisms that will give rise to disproportionate costs or delays to any planning process.

Options

12. To not agree the draft Statement of Community Involvement for consultation purposes. This will delay the adoption of the new SCI for Greater Cambridge which is required by regulations.

Implications

13. In the writing of this report, there are no significant implications taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues.

Consultation responses

14. None

Effect on Strategic Aims

15. **A. LIVING WELL Support our communities to remain in good health whilst continuing to protect the natural and built environment**
The consultation period on the draft SCI will allow stakeholders and communities to shape the way in which they can engage in planning matters, including, in due course on the Local Plan.
16. **B. HOMES FOR OUR FUTURE**
Secure the delivery of a wide range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future communities
The consultation period on the draft SCI will allow stakeholders and communities to shape the way in which they can engage in planning matters, including, in due course on housing needs of existing communities.
17. **C. CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**
Work with partners to ensure new transport and digital infrastructure supports and strengthens communities and that our approach to growth sustains prosperity
The draft SCI identifies that there may be further opportunity to make more use of digital communication means within the overall planning process, and this will be kept under review as the shared service continues to take shape.
18. **D. AN INNOVATIVE AND DYNAMIC ORGANISATION**
Adopt a more commercial and business-like approach to ensure we can continue to deliver the best possible services at the lowest possible cost
By seeking to make best use of digital communication means, the Council will reduce the costs of achieving effective engagement in planning matters.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

No additional documents.

Report Author: Amanda Thorn – Principal Planning Policy Officer
Telephone: (01223) 457183

