

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Planning and Regulation
Date 21 November 2018



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of the key outcomes of the public consultation on the draft SCI.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the revised SCI.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive note the outcomes of the draft SCI consultation (attached in Appendix A).
- 2.2 That the revised SCI (Appendix B) be adopted.
- 2.3 That the SCI, 2012 (BD1) be revoked.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which

sets out their vision and strategy for effective community engagement throughout the planning process.

- 3.2 New legislation in the form of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017, requires SCI's to be reviewed every 5 years. The Council's last SCI was adopted in 2012. This provides an update to that document and, once adopted, will replace the existing version. Regularly reviewing the SCI allows for any policy changes to be incorporated, and allows for new methods of communication and consultation to be considered.
- 3.3 With the emphasis on community participation and localism high up on the national agenda, it is becoming increasingly important to encourage local people to play an active role in the early stages of all planning activities. The SCI will provide an updated framework to ensure that comprehensive and effective public engagement will take place throughout all stages of the planning process.
- 3.4 The draft SCI sets out:
- Why consultation is important
 - What will be consulted on
 - Who will be consulted
 - When consultation and engagement will take place
 - How these views will be taken into account
- 3.5 It includes guidance on consultation during the production of planning policy documents, as well as setting out the formal statutory processes for producing these documents. It also sets out what the Council will do to engage people in relation to planning applications, and this version of the SCI has been expanded to include sections on both neighbourhood planning and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 3.6 The Council carried out an 8 week public consultation on the draft SCI in July – September 2018.
- 3.7 Representations made in response to the consultation have since been collated and summarised by Officers and minor amendments made to the SCI.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That the Executive note the outcomes of the draft SCI consultation (Appendix A).

- 4.1 Public consultation on the SCI took place from 18 July to 12 September 2018.
- 4.2 Letters and emails were sent to all of the people, businesses and organisations on our consultation database. Copies of the consultation document were made available at our main offices and at the libraries in

Stevenage town Centre and Old Town. The document was also put on the Councils website, on the Planning Policy web page and also in the specific consultation area 'Have Your Say' Links to the consultation document were also published on both Facebook and twitter.

4.3 A total of 7 representations were received from 6 representors. Responses were received from:

- **Organisations:** Transport for London; Historic England; and CPRE
- **Three individuals**

4.4 Of these representations, 1 offered clear support for the draft SCI and the remaining 6 representations were either general comments, or did not provide a clear overall view either way.

4.5 The key points raised have been summarised below, along with our response to these comments. A more detailed summary of responses can be found in Appendix A and the full responses can be viewed via the Council's consultation portal (BD2):

Respondent	Comments	Our response
Historic England	General Support Amend name from English Heritage to Historic England in Appendix A	Noted Amendment made
TFL	No specific comments	
CPRE	CPRE should be added to the named Local Environmental Groups	CPRE has been added to the 'General Consultation Bodies' list in Appendix A
Mr Stone	Local Plan was not appropriately prepared, was deliberately skewed to ignore national guidance on Green Belt, referring to Forster Country	The SCI is the about the ways, when and for how long the Council consults on planning policy documents. It is not an opportunity to comment on the Local Plan
Mr Madgin	The Showmans Guild should be included in Appendix A	The Council considers the Showman's Guild to be included in the list of 'General Consultation Bodies' under local groups in Appendix A
Mr Glanfield	The Council ignore resident's objections to local development. The Council are offering the general public the opportunity to object despite objections being	The SCI sets out how, who and when the Council consults on planning documents. All responses are considered, but the local planning authority are required to make a

	ignore by the planning department. To receive truthful important feedback, planners must always listen to the essential objections from the local residents.	planning judgement, so will not necessarily agree with all objections made.
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- 4.6 A Statement of Consultation has been produced (Appendix C), which provides full details of the consultation and the responses received. The Council has considered the inclusion of bodies to Appendix A and amendments have been made accordingly.
- 4.7 Members are requested to formally note the outcome of the public consultation.

Recommendation 2.2: That the revised SCI (attached as Appendix A) be adopted
Recommendation 2.3: That the SCI, 20012 (BD1) be revoked

- 4.8 The final version of the SCI, incorporating the minor amendments made following consultation, is attached to this report as Appendix A.
- 4.9 Members are requested to approve the final version of the SCI for adoption.
- 4.10 Once adopted, the SCI 2018 will replace the existing 2012 SCI. Members are requested to formally approve the revocation of the 2012 SCI.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consultation on this SCI has been met by the Local Plan budget for 2018/19.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 An updated SCI will ensure the Council is compliant with the most up-to-date regulations.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3 The SCI contains a section on equalities and diversity. It seeks to ensure that our consultations and planning activities are open to everyone and the Council do not discriminate against different groups or individuals, in line with the Equality Act 2010. It recognises that some groups are harder to engage with than others and suggests alternative consultation techniques and methods are used in order to overcome these barriers.

- 5.4 An Equality Impact Assessment of the Planning Policy service has previously been carried out. It identified that the unit's responsibilities and methods would not discriminate against people on grounds of age; disability; gender; ethnicity; sexual orientation; religion/belief; or by way of financial exclusion.

Risk Implications

- 5.5 There are no significant risks associated with the adoption of the SCI.

Policy Implications

- 5.6 The SCI makes reference to the Co-operative Council ethos of Stevenage. It recognises that the Council is currently reviewing its corporate strategies in relation to consultation and engagement, but takes into account the Co-operative Council objectives.
- 5.7 Officers have worked with the Council's corporate policy team, as well as the Executive Members for Children, Young People and Leisure and Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council, in producing the SCI and determining how best to engage with the community.

Planning Implications

- 5.8 Once adopted, the revised SCI will provide updated guidelines for public engagement in the planning process. It will replace the existing SCI adopted in May 2012 and should be followed when producing planning policy documents, considering planning applications or undertaking neighbourhood planning.

Human Rights Implications

- 5.9 The SCI should help to ensure that the planning service is fully inclusive and respectful of human rights. The SCI details the rights that the public have to engage with the plan-making process.

Information Technology Implications

- 5.10 The SCI recognises the importance of taking advantage of new technologies to improve and expand our consultation processes, and the opportunities for people to get involved. Whilst the Council does not require any new systems to enable this, improvements to the Council's website to make consultation events more visible and appealing to users would be welcomed.
- 5.11 Proprietary document management and consultation software has been used for the preparation of planning documents since 2008. This allows for documents to be published and responses to be made, directly on-line, via the Council's web-site.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 [Statement of Community Involvement, 2012](#)
- BD2 [SCI Executive Report, July 2018](#)
- BD3 [Consultation portal – full consultation responses](#)

APPENDICES

- A Summary of consultation responses, 2018
- B Statement of Community Involvement, 2018
- C SCI Statement of Consultation, 2018