

Statement of Community Involvement

Responsible Officer

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1. Summary

This report proposes an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), to replace the Statement of Community Involvement previously reviewed in 2014. This is a statutory document and is an important statement of how the Council, as local planning authority, informs, consults and engages with the community on planning policy and development management. The SCI will be open for consultation for 12 weeks.

2. Recommendations

That the draft Statement of Community Involvement be agreed for public consultation and a further report to Cabinet will follow this with any recommended amendments for Cabinet to consider prior to adopting the revised SCI

REPORT

1. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is an important planning document which every Local Planning Authority must adopt. Broadly the SCI sets out how the Council will involve the public and organisations in the planning process, both in terms of planning policy preparation and in the determination of planning applications. In doing this the SCI sets out who the Council will be involving, how this process will be handled; when this involvement will happen; and an indication of what methods that will be used.
2. The preparation of an SCI is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Localism Act 2011 re-emphasises the importance of enabling communities to contribute towards shaping the places where they live. The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 states the SCI must set out the Council's policies for advising and assisting with neighbourhood planning. In addition the SCI must include policies for involving interested parties in the preliminary stage of plan making (save where the Council has complied with the initial preparation requirements before 31 July 2018) This

SCI is a Local Development Document and once adopted it will become a statutory part of the Council's Local Plan. It will supersede Shropshire Council's previously adopted SCI 2014 and will take account of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

Proposed revisions to the SCI

- 3 The proposed revisions to the SCI principally relate to the Council's approach and procedures in relation to assisting the community with neighbourhood planning and processes for development management.
- 4 The revisions to the SCI with regard to neighbourhood planning concern responsibilities of the Council; assistance and advice from the Council; and consultation methods in neighbourhood planning.
- 5 Changes are proposed to the neighbour notification process for development management where it is proposed to publicise all applications by site notices rather than by letters to neighbours.
- 6 Some other amendments have been proposed as follows: -
 - Reference to data protection legislation has been updated, required by the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation, brought into force in 2018
 - Reference to the NPPF has been updated as a revised NPPF was published in February 2019
 - Reference to the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 is included.
 - Reference to neighbourhood planning in the Localism Act 2011.
 - The insertion of Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 states a review must be completed every five years starting from the date of adoption of the SCI. As such, the 'Monitoring and Review' section of the document has been amended to reflect this.
 - Provision is made for amendments to the core processes set out in the SCI to facilitate continuity in circumstances such as the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 7 The proposed draft version of the SCI is included as Appendix 1 to this report. If agreed by the Cabinet, the SCI will provide the framework for supporting community involvement on all planning issues, from planning policy documents to individual planning applications.

- 8 It is the intention to publish the draft SCI for a 12 week public consultation and to provide a further report to Cabinet subsequently to consider the responses and recommended changes to the draft document.
- 9 The SCI may need to be reviewed further in light of any changes agreed to planning law following the publication on 6th August of the Government's white paper, "Planning for the future".

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The production of the revised Local Plan for Shropshire is required to be produced in conformity with an adopted SCI. The requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 as they relate to Statements of Community Involvement came into force on 31st July 2018, which means that the current SCI is not up to date. Any delays in the adoption of the revised SCI could impact on the timetable for the production of the new Local Plan.

4. Equality Analysis

The SCI pays much attention to facilitating equal access to participation in local planning decisions and presents a range of methods that can be used to engage the community, including groups with protected characteristics.

It is not considered that the revisions will have an impact on any groups with protected characteristics; however the revisions will be subject to public consultation following approval from Cabinet to consult.

To increase the awareness of groups with possible limited access or groups with protected characteristics, the Council will be more proactive in the first stages of neighbourhood planning as well as in all consultations. Following the completion of a public consultation, a Statement of Consultation will be produced and appropriate adjustments will be made to the draft document, where necessary.

5. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The cost of the consultation and publication of the SCI and the requirements of the SCI for future consultation 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. Climate Change Appraisal

The revised Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared to maximise its effectiveness and to have regard to communication methods that reduce the need to travel or consume resources in a way that contributes to climate change.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Appendix 1 – Draft revised Statement of Community Involvement

Shropshire Council Statement of Community Involvement – Revised 2014

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_accessible_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>

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Gwilym Butler

Local Member – All members

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft revised Statement of Community Involvement