

REPORT TO CABINET

Open/Exempt		Would any decisions proposed :		
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO
		Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO
		Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO
Lead Member: Cllr Richard Blunt E-mail: cllr.Richard.Blunt@West-Norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted: All		
		Other Members consulted: LDF Task Group		
Lead Officer: Stuart Ashworth/ Alan Gomm E-mail: stuart.ashworth@westnorfolk.gov.uk alan.gomm@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 6417 / 6237		Other Officers consulted: Management Team		
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO

Date of meeting: 23 May 2017

KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

Summary

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a document which outlines how the Council will consult with the public as part of the Local Plan process, on Planning Applications, and also on Neighbourhood Plans. At the May 2016 Cabinet it was agreed that the SCI be made available for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks and that the final version of the document prepared after the consultation period be reported back through to Council for final approval

Recommendation

That Cabinet recommend to Council that:

1. The final version of the document is endorsed, and;
2. Is published via the Council's website.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Borough Council has an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement adopted, to inform the next stages of the Local Plan Review and planning application process.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Borough Council adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2006. This review of the Borough Council's SCI takes account of the recent changes in legislation and policy. Planning legislation sets out a number of statutory requirements with respect to consultation on planning policy documents and planning applications. The SCI sets out how the Borough Council will meet these requirements along with the additional activities the Borough Council will undertake to involve people in the planning system.
- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011 also sets out a 'duty to co-operate'. It is a requirement that the Borough Council engage with neighbouring Councils and other statutory bodies to consider joint approaches to plan-making. The Borough Council is committed to meeting this duty and intends to work closely with neighbouring authorities, other partner organisations and stakeholders.
- 1.3 The revised SCI was made available for public consultation for the statutory period of 6 weeks; this gave stakeholders and the local community the opportunity to comment upon the document. The consultation ran from 6 February 2017 and 20 March 2017 and 22 comments were received. The SCI as presented at consultation and attached to this report is substantially different from the original as published in 2006. It is therefore not possible to prepare a direct comparison via tracked changes.
- 1.4 As the new SCI will be a change in Borough Council policy it requires approval by Full Council.
- 1.5 As noted above 22 responses were received to the consultation. Appendix 1 gives an outline of the comments received and a suggested response / action. In summary the comments covered the following areas:
 - Support for the SCI and the principles
 - The need to update some dates and organisations
 - A number of comments which did not relate to the SCI or went beyond the direct scope of the SCI
- 1.6 In terms of responses to these comments, we are proposing the following broad amendments:
 - Update details to take account of the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies plan (2016)
 - Update the consultee information
 - Number of clarifications to text

A number of points raised relate to operational details which are beyond the direct scope of the SCI. A high level of details could

unnecessarily undermine the process. The points are well made but should be considered in local circumstances by officers on the ground.

2. Options Considered

- 2.1 It was important that the document was revised to bring it up to date. The previous document was more detailed and complex and so has dated quickly, with the new version also being much clearer.
- 2.2 It is a requirement to publish a SCI.

3. Policy Implications

- 3.1 The SCI, once adopted, will set out the consultation standards and requirements for the Council, stakeholders and the community. It will sit alongside the Local Plan, as part of the suite of documents which make up and inform the development plan.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 None directly arising from this report; however the consultation methods described will require resources. There are existing budgets for this as they are an ongoing cost.

5. Personnel Implications

- 5.1 None directly arising from this report

6. Statutory Considerations

- 6.1 The SCI is a document required by planning legislation, and much of the consultation we do carry out is also specified in legislation and guidance.

7. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 7.1 Pre-screening report attached.

8. Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 If the SCI was too onerous, then it has the ability to overcomplicate the processes, and could result in delays or an increased amount of resources required.
- 8.2 The Council must follow the minimum requirements, in line with legislation, to ensure we would not be vulnerable to legal challenge on any of our documents/ processes.
- 8.3 The Council clearly would not want to set out standards for consultation, which we are then unable to follow/ adhere to. We will monitor the content of the document and review it if required.

9. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

- 9.1 None

10. Background Papers

Appendices:

Appendix 1. An appreciation of the comments received from the consultation

Appendix 2. The final version of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) document



**Pre-Screening Equality Impact
Assessment**

Name of policy/service/function	Statement of Community Involvement				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	New				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	Update of existing policy document setting out how the Council will consult when carrying out its planning functions. The policy is constrained by statutory provisions, as much consultation is legally required.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			x	
	Disability			x	
	Gender			x	
	Gender Re-assignment			x	
	Marriage/civil partnership			x	
	Pregnancy & maternity			x	
	Race			x	
	Religion or belief			x	
	Sexual orientation			x	
	Other (eg low income)			x	
Question	Answer	Comments			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No				
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No				
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No				
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	Actions:			
		Actions agreed by EWG member:			
Assessment completed by: Alan Gomm					
Job title: Planning Policy Manger	Date: 06/04/2017				