

Report to Cabinet

25 January 2017

By the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development

NON KEY DECISION



**Horsham
District
Council**

Not Exempt

Statement of Community Involvement

Executive Summary

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory document which sets out the ways in which the council will engage with residents, communities, businesses, local organisations and other groups to ensure as many people as possible are able to have a say in planning decisions that affect them.

The document will provide guidance on how the planning system works and sets out how the council will inform, consult and involve people in planning decisions within Horsham District, excluding the area within the South Downs National Park.

A draft Statement of Community Involvement was agreed for consultation at the Cabinet Meeting of 22 September 2016. Consultation was held between 26 September and 7 November 2016, and in response to this consultation a small number of clarifications have been made to the document.

If adopted, this document will replace the SCI that was published in 2013 which had become out of date as a result of legislative changes to the planning system.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to approve the following recommendations:

- i) To adopt the Statement of Community Involvement, attached at Appendix 1.
- ii) That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development has delegated authority to agree minor editorial changes prior to publication.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) To enable an up to date and accurate SCI to set out guidance on how the planning system works and sets out how the council will inform, consult and involve people in planning decisions within Horsham District
- ii) To undertake minor editorial or typographical amendments.

Background Papers: Statement of Community Involvement (2013)

Wards affected: All

Contact: Dr Chris Lyons, Director of Planning, Economic Development & Property,
Barbara Childs, Head of Strategic Planning & Sustainability

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 It is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for a local authority to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI is public statement which lets communities and organisations know when and how they can be involved in both the preparation of planning policy documents and decisions on planning applications.
- 1.2 The current SCI was reviewed in November 2013 and incorporated minor editorial changes which were made under Delegated approval. In light of changes to the planning system, (for example updated planning legislation now refers to Local Plans rather than Local Development Frameworks) and recent feedback from consultation bodies, a revision and update of the authority's SCI is needed.
- 1.3 The updated SCI sets out the standards to be met by the authority in terms of community involvement, building upon the minimum requirements set out in Planning Regulations. It has been reviewed to reflect 'plain English' guidance and the Council's own communication guidelines as well as recent legislative changes. Following consultation on the draft SCI, which was held between 23 September and 7 November 2016, a small number of clarifications have been made to the document.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) provides the policy framework for future strategic planning in the district. It informs the public of the location of future strategic development and provides a timeframe in which development will take place.
- 2.2 The Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.
- 2.3 In addition to the requirements of Planning Regulations the SCI must take into account those of the Constitution. The document should address the consultation requirements for planning applications, as well as any future Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents as set out in the Local Development Scheme.

3 Details

- 3.1 Following the adoption of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) in November 2015 and recent feedback from consultation bodies, the SCI has been redrafted.
- 3.2 A revised SCI has been developed through discussions with relevant sections of the Council, including the Strategic Planning & Sustainability Team and Development

Management, as well as taking into account the feedback from consultation on the draft document. It is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

- 3.3 It is a requirement under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2008 to notify 'specific bodies' of the intention to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement and invite representations about what the content of the statement may be.
- 3.4 At the cabinet on 22 September 2016, the draft SCI was agreed for consultation which took place between 23 September and 7 November 2016. In addition to seeking views from the specific consultation bodies, views from the wider community were also invited through advertisement in the local press and on the Council's website. Copies of the draft SCI were also sent to libraries across the District.
- 3.5 In total, fifteen responses were received in relation to the SCI. A summary of these comments together with the Council's response is set out in Appendix 2. Overall, there was support for the SCI, and many comments were observations rather than requiring specific changes to the document. A number of respondents did however make suggestions where clarifications could be made to improve the clarity of the document. The document has therefore been amended to reflect these points. One key area where this has been undertaken is in relation to neighbourhood planning section, to which a number of comments related. It was not however possible to make all requested changes to the document. The reasoning for this is set out in more detail in Appendix 2, but in one case, the proposed amendment was in relation to a neighbourhood planning consultation, which is run by Parish Councils and not HDC. A further proposed change, to extend the consultation periods for planning applications could not be accommodated as it would prevent the Council from being able to determine planning applications within the required timescales.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 If adopted, the SCI will be published on the Council's website and will be made available in libraries for viewing. The Council will inform all statutory bodies and other respondents to the consultation of the adoption of the SCI, and will provide a copy of Appendix 2, enabling the organisations who were contacted to see how their views have been taken into account.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 The Planning & Development Policy Development Advisory Group considered the draft SCI on 8 September 2016 and endorsed its contents subject to the wording on the Council's constitution being clarified. This updated wording has now been inserted. Clarifications have now been made to the document in response to public consultation as set out above and these have also been discussed with the Planning & Development Policy Development Advisory Group on 12 January 2017. In light of these discussions further wording has been inserted to refer to consultation methods and advertising, and reference to the Council's constitution has been clarified.

- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources have been consulted during the preparation of the document and they support its contents.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 The Council could continue to rely on the existing SCI from 2013. However, this document is out of date and therefore this course of action is not recommended.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 There are no financial or staffing consequences.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Updating the existing SCI will reduce the risk of challenge to the adoption of new planning policy and decisions made on planning applications.

10 Other Considerations

- 10.1 Without an up to-date SCI there is a risk that any future Development Plan Document being found 'unsound' by the Inspector during an examination in public.