

## STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) ADDENDUM

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Viv Evans, Head of Planning
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</b>	No
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	Appendix 1.SCI Addendum Appendix 2. Community Involvement 2019.

### Summary

The report outlines the proposed addendum to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement following the safety guidance and restrictions from government to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

### Recommendation (s)

#### The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve the addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 1) for the purpose of a public consultation and delegate powers to the Head of Planning to publish the Addendum with any minor amendments following consideration of consultation responses.**

## 1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council need to make some temporary amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019). The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that Local planning authorities review their SCI and update it in line with government guidelines around social distancing and staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the approach to ensure that communities and stakeholders are involved in planning matters. The SCI aims to enable efficient engagement on all planning matters including planning applications, new planning policy documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

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- 2.2 The current Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in November 2019. In March 2020, Covid-19 restrictions to reduce the spread of the virus has necessitated changes in legislation and consequently, the way in which Local Authorities have been able to undertake certain aspects of engagement with communities with regard to planning matters.
- 2.3 In recognition of the changeability of the restrictions and safety guidance from government, it is anticipated that the addendum will need to be used flexibly to respond to the changes in restrictions which may evolve quickly and in line with the national and local changes in legislation as they arise.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

#### Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Impact Assessment
- 3.2 The Council values the contribution that the community and stakeholders provide in planning matters, however Government restrictions associated with preventing the spread of COVID-19 will affect the ability of the Local Authority to engage in the same way that it did prior to COVID-19. The pandemic has required the Local Authority, communities and stakeholders to be able to adapt to changes with flexibility. The Addendum will enable the Council to continue to move forward with planning matters in consultation with its community and stakeholders in line with government legislation and reform.
- 3.3 COVID-19 creates challenges in respect to balancing the safety of communities, stakeholders and employees with keeping the planning department on track and in line with changes in legislation, reform and targets.
- 3.4 The speed at which changes to government legislation have taken place require officers to adjust swiftly and it is anticipated that this will continue to be the case for some time. As such, the addendum seeks to ensure that all our parties and interested parties have a clear understanding of the changes and why they are being made.
- 3.5 Anticipated changes to how the planning service consult with the stakeholders will require staff to be adequately trained and resourced.
- 3.6 Crime & Disorder
  - 3.6.1 None arising
- 3.7 Safeguarding
  - 3.7.1 The safety of the communities, interested parties and employees requires temporary amendments to the SCI to reduce the risks and spread of COVID-19

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### 3.8 Dependencies

#### 3.8.1 None arising

### 3.9 Other

#### 3.9.1 None arising

## 4 Financial Implications

4.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is associated with the wider approach to communication with all interested parties and stakeholders. In this regard, wider teams across the Council including legal services, procurement and communications are likely to be involved and assisting with various aspects detailed within the Statement of Community Involvement. External specialists with expertise in communications and digital platforms will be engaged to assist to provide appropriate online presence and information facilities.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The cost of any engagement of external specialists should be met from within the service's existing budget envelope.

## 5 Legal Implications

5.1 None arising from the contents of this report

5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

## 6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Opportunity and Prosperity and Safe and Well

6.2 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the Council's approach to ensure that communities and stakeholders are involved in planning. This contributes towards delivering the Council's Visions and objectives identified in its Four Year.

6.3 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.4 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No direct impact

6.5 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:**

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As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council are making some temporary amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement (2019). The temporary changes outlined are being made to protect the health of Epsom and Ewell's communities, residents and staff in response to the Government's advice.

### 6.6 Partnerships:

The Council has a duty to cooperate with relevant stakeholders in the preparation of a Development Plan. The Committee will receive information on progress with the Duty at appropriate points in the process.

## 7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

### Previous reports:

- Report to LPP 14 November 2019 to approve Statement of Community Involvement

<https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s14478/Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%202019.pdf>

### Other papers:

- Community Involvement 2019