

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

Head of Service:	Victoria Potts, Head of Place Development
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision? (yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Draft Statement of Community Involvement (2022)

Summary

This paper is submitted to the Licencing and Planning Policy Committee for a decision to undertake a public consultation on an updated Draft Statement of Community Involvement in line with the Council's statutory requirements.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve the revised draft Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 1 of this report) for a four-week public consultation**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The Council is required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how local communities, businesses and other interested groups can be involved when we prepare our planning policies and determine planning applications.
- 1.2 The Councils current SCI was adopted in November 2019 and since this time, new digital approaches to public consultation have emerged and gained traction as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. There have also been changes to legislation which has resulted in some of the content of the current SCI being out of date, such as the process for preparing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule.

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

26 May 2022

- 1.3 In addition to legislative changes, there are some inconsistencies within the current SCI which have been addressed in the revised draft, for example when press notices are required to be published to publicise planning applications. This has been achieved through restructuring the document and updating the information presented to align with legislative requirements and the planning practice guidance.
- 1.4 Having an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement is a requirement for the Local Planning Authority and ensures engagement is being undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements and good practice.
- 1.5 The four-week public consultation will be publicised on the Council's webpage, and consultation material will also be available at the Town Hall and libraries within the Borough. Key statutory consultees and those registered with the Council in having an interest in Planning Policy consultations will be notified in line with our statutory requirements.
- 1.6 Following public consultation, the document will be amended as necessary and then a summary of the comments received and an amended SCI, factoring in any material comments will be presented to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee in July.

2 Background

- 2.1 The preparation of a SCI is a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. This legislation requires the Local Planning Authority (in this case the Council) to prepare a statement for how it will involve those with an interest in development in the area, including the preparation and review of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents, Neighbourhood Plans/Orders, Community Infrastructure Levy and the consideration of planning applications. It is also a requirement to update the SCI every five years.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement is to set out how people and groups can engage with the planning system in the best way by setting out how the public, businesses and interest groups within Epsom and Ewell Borough can get involved in the creation of local planning policy, neighbourhood planning and the planning application decision making process.
- 2.3 The Draft Statement of Community Involvement has been updated to provide more information on how people and organisations can get involved in the development of planning policy documents at specific (statutory) stages of their development.

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

26 May 2022

- 2.4 The core changes to the document are that it has been restructured with greater use of tables to demonstrate how people can get involved at different stages of the plan making process. In addition, the document has been amended to reflect changes to the CIL regulations which have removed the need to consult on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule.
- 2.5 The Chapter of the SCI that relates to planning applications has been amended so that it focuses on when individuals / organisations can engage in the planning application process, notably during the statutory consultation period. The document also clarifies how the council will publicise planning applications to satisfy legislative requirements and addresses some contradictions within the current document which have resulted in queries to the Development Management Team.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 The Revised Statement of Community Involvement identifies a range of consultation methods for the development of planning policy documents to enable participation by all.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 None arising from this report

3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 None arising from this report

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 The preparation of the new Local Plan must be prepared in conformity with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. It is therefore critical to ensure the SCI supports the preparation of the new Local Plan and is in place at the earliest opportunity in its preparation to provide a robust framework for engagement. This is also important to set out how the Council will consult on planning applications for development.

3.5 Other

- 3.5.1 None arising from this report

4 Financial Implications

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

26 May 2022

- 4.1 There are no direct resource implications. Costs will be met within existing resources and budgets.
- 4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are legal issues to consider in progressing the SCI towards adoption, in relation to satisfying the necessary regulations. The preparation of a SCI is a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.
- 5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** legal considerations have been set out in the report

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- 6.2 The revised Statement of Community Involvement will upon adoption set commitments to how the Council will engage with the public at specific stages of Local Plan preparation. The Council's new Local Plan will contribute towards delivering the Council's vision and priorities in its Four-Year Plan.
- 6.3 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.4 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None for the purposes of this report
- 6.5 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None for the purposes of this report
- 6.6 **Partnerships:** The SCI will set out to partners including residents how they can engage with the planning process

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- [Statement of Community Involvement \(November 2019\)](#)

Other papers:

- None