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| <b>Full Council</b>    |   |
| <b>Meeting Date</b>    | 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2025  |
| <b>Report Title</b>    | Local Plan Review - Statement of Community Involvement – Consultation Feedback and Adoption             |
| <b>EMT Lead</b>        | Emma Wiggins – Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods  |
| <b>Head of Service</b> | Joanne Johnson - Head of Place  |
| <b>Lead Officers</b>   | Anna Stonor – Principal Planning Officer (Policy) and Christopher Mansfield - Planning Officer (Policy) |
| <b>Classification</b>  | <b>Open</b>   |
| <b>Recommendations</b> | 1. To adopt the Statement of Community Involvement, as set out in Appendix IV                           |

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 At the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, it was agreed that the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), subject to minor changes as minuted, be published for public consultation.
- 1.2 A six-week public consultation period on the draft SCI was undertaken. This ran from 21<sup>st</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025. The results of this consultation were reported to Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 where it was recommended that the proposed changes were noted, that P&R agree the proposed changes and that the SCI proceeds to Full Council for adoption.
- 1.3 On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025 the SCI was discussed at P&R who resolved that the updated SCI, subject to changes discussed and agreed, be recommended to Full Council for adoption.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to present the revised draft SCI following public consultation and amendments made at both PTPWG and P&R and to recommend the SCI, as set out in Appendix IV, for adoption.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The SCI sets out how the community can get involved in local planning matters. It explains how people can play a part in the preparation of Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, as well as the consideration of planning applications and dealing with unauthorised development. It also sets out what is expected from those proposing developments.

2.2 Local Planning Authorities are required to produce SCIs and review them every 5 years. The current SCI was adopted in 2018 and updated in 2021 to reflect guidelines related to COVID 19. As such, the current SCI is now in need of a refresh, and on 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2024, a draft updated SCI was agreed for consultation at P&R.

2.3 The process of consultation with the public, and feedback from PTPWG and P&R has resulted in a series of responses/amendments to the SCI, as set out in the Appendices:

- Appendix I – comments from the public consultation and responses
- Appendix II – comments from PTPWG on 16<sup>th</sup> September and responses
- Appendix III – comments from P&R on 5<sup>th</sup> November and responses. Please note, Appendix III also includes a table of typographical corrections/updates and clarifications
- Appendix IV - the updated draft SCI (dated December 2025)

### **3 Proposals**

3.1 To adopt the Statement of Community Involvement, as set out in Appendix IV.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

4.1 That members reject some, or all, of the suggested changes to the SCI as set out in Appendix IV. The SCI has been through public consultation, PTPWG and P&R and it is considered to be a document that reflects both legislative requirements and the public and members' views on how to involve the community in planning matters. As such this alternative is rejected.

4.2 That members do not adopt the SCI, as set out in Appendix IV, and retain the current version. It is a legislative requirement to update SCIs every five years, and it is beneficial to have an up-to-date SCI published in advance of the next consultation phases of the Local Plan. The Local Plan can then be consulted on in line with the new document. As such this alternative is rejected.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 Specific consultation for the draft SCI took place from 21<sup>st</sup> May for six weeks. Officers have worked with colleagues in the Planning Applications and Planning Investigations teams in preparing and updating the SCI before and after consultation. The draft SCI has also been reviewed by Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group at their meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and Policy and Resources Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

### **6 Implications**

| Issue | Implications |
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| Corporate Plan   | The proposals in the report align with the following Corporate Plan action:<br><br>A Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.              |
| Financial, Resource and Property                             | The Local Plan work programme is fully funded across a combination of base budget and committed reserves and central government grant.                   |
| Legal, Statutory and Procurement                             | Updating the SCI every five years is a legislative requirement, therefore publishing an updated SCI will help meet the Council's statutory requirements. |
| Crime and Disorder   | There are no direct crime and disorder impacts arising from this decision.   |
| Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency                 | No implications identified at this stage.  |
| Health and Wellbeing   | No implications identified at this stage.  |
| Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults | No implications identified at this stage.  |
| Risk Management and Health and Safety                        | No implications identified at this stage.  |
| Equality and Diversity                                       | The SCI enables all members of Swale society to be involved in the planning process.   |
| Privacy and Data Protection                                  | No implications identified at this stage.  |

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: SCI Public Consultation Comments (Summaries) and Responses
- Appendix II: Table of Comments and Responses following Planning and Transportation Working Group, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025
- Appendix III: Table of Comments and Responses following Policy and Resources Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Appendix IV: Draft Statement of Community Involvement, December 2025

## 8 Background Papers

- 8.1 (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group, 17/09/2024 19:00 and Minutes Template for Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group Committee on Tuesday, 17 September 2024, 7.00 pm
- 8.2 (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Policy and Resources Committee, 16/10/2024 19:00 and Minutes Template for Planning and Resources Committee on Wednesday, 16 October 2024 7. Pm
- 8.3 Details of Public Consultation (including Draft SCI), May to July 2025: <https://swale.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/local-plans/local-plan-review/public-consultation#h2>
- 8.4 Agenda, reports and minutes of the PTPWG, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025: [Agenda for Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group on Tuesday, 16 September 2025, 7.00 pm](#)