

Local Development Framework Panel		Agenda Item: 8
Meeting Date	20 June 2017	
Report Title	Statement of Community Involvement	
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning	
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins	
Head of Service	James Freeman	
Lead Officer	Natalie Earl	
Key Decision	No	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	Reference number:	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) be recommended for a period of public consultation; and 2. Agree to delegate to the Chairman of the LDF Panel together with the Head of Planning Services to allow the document to be updated prior to consultation if any of the proposals set out within the government's Housing White Paper (2017) are adopted into policy before September. 	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines what a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is and why Swale needs to refresh its existing one. It presents a draft SCI to publish for consultation.

2 Background

- 2.1 An SCI sets out how, when and where the Council will consult with local and statutory stakeholders both during the production of development plan documents and within the development management process. The overall ethos behind an SCI is that local planning authorities should be informative and receptive to views from the earliest stages and throughout the planning process, to give everyone the opportunity to contribute.
- 2.2 The Council is required by law to produce an SCI and, once adopted, the provisions which relate to plan-making become binding. The Council's current SCI was adopted in 2008. Since then the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) has been introduced and along with the Localism Act in 2011, means that the emphasis is now firmly placed on early engagement and

collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses, making planning more inclusive of people and communities who want to be involved in planning in their area.

- 2.3 There have also been changes to national legislation since 2008, such as the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans, the Duty to Cooperate, assets of community value. Changes at the local level have also occurred such as a suite of new planning policy documents and the inclusion of social media as a public engagement tool. Much of the terminology used in the adopted SCI is also now out of date and needs refreshing.
- 2.4 The draft SCI has therefore been written to reflect the above changes and sets out processes of consultation which are inclusive and meaningful, whilst recognising the time and resource constraints resulting from the need to adhere to statutory processes and the capacity of the planning teams.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposal is for members to agree the draft SCI to go out to consultation for a period of 6 weeks, starting at the beginning of September 2017.
- 3.2 If any of the proposals set out within the government's Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' (February 2017) are adopted into policy or regulation before the SCI is published for consultation, any necessary amendments will be made in consultation with the Chairman of the LDF Panel and the Head of Planning Services. The White Paper was unclear on what these could involve – merely inviting comment on what could offer a more 'proportionate' means of consultation and examination of different types of plan.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council is required by Statutory Regulation to produce an SCI and local development documents and planning applications must be prepared in accordance with it. As such, it is essential to adopt one.
- 4.2 The only alternative option would be to change the content of the draft SCI and agree to go out for consultation by the end of the year as an updated SCI needs to be in place before work on the formal stages of the Local Plan review can begin. However, it is felt that the draft SCI, as currently written, represents a reasonable balance between the need to undertake meaningful consultation and the need to continue to progress local planning documents and to determine planning applications in a timely manner.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The draft SCI will go out for a 6 week consultation at the start of September 2017, in order to avoid the summer holidays.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports the Council's corporate priorities for a Borough and a community to be proud of.
Financial, Resource and Property	This will be undertaken within the Planning Policy teams existing workload and budget.
Legal and Statutory	Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement, which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Development Plan and determining planning applications. The Statement of Community Involvement should be published on the local planning authority's website.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Sustainability	None identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The SCI itself ensures that all members of the community will be able to participate, if desired, in Swale's planning process.

7 Appendices

Appendix I: Draft Statement of Consultation

8 Background Papers