

# PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

28 MAY 2024

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

### A.1 ADOPTION OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

(Report prepared by William Fuller)

#### PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

##### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee of the outcome of the public consultation exercise carried out in relation to the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and that Officers have made a number of minor modifications to the SCI in response to those consultation responses.

To seek the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee's endorsement of the SCI, as amended, as well as its approval that the SCI be submitted to the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning for their formal decision to formally adopt the SCI on behalf of the Council.

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

###### Key Points:

- It was agreed at the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to send the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) out to a six-week public consultation.
- This consultation took place between 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the results of which are included in this report.
- Officers have made a number of minor modifications to the SCI in response to consultation responses.
- Members are now asked to consider whether to endorse the SCI, as amended, and to approve that the SCI be submitted to the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning for their formal decision to formally adopt the SCI.

SCIs must be reviewed regularly, to ensure they remain up-to-date and contain appropriate measures for engaging with the community about Planning matters.

The currently adopted SCI was updated in 2017 (as an agenda item on the Local Plan Committee) to allow for the preparation of the Garden Community Development Plan Document (DPD) and again in 2020 (as an item for the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee) to incorporate the amended consultation requirements which the Government introduced as part of their broader legislative package in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Officers have now reviewed the Council's adopted SCI again in advance of the Local Plan review commencing and propose only minor changes to ensure it is consistent with most recent guidance and good practice. The updated SCI itself was the subject of public consultation, which took place early this year.

A limited number of minor modifications were made to the SCI as a result of the comments received during public consultation. Members of the Committee are now asked to consider whether to recommend the adoption of the updated Statement of Community Involvement to the Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee –**

- (a) notes the responses received to the public consultation exercise;**
- (b) endorses the contents of the final version of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI); and**
- (c) recommends to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning that he makes an executive decision under his delegated powers to formally adopt the SCI on behalf of the Council.**

## **PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

Having an up-to-date SCI will help the preparation of the new Local Plan. The review of the Local Plan is identified as a priority within the Corporate Plan (Our Vision) 2024-2028. On 20 December 2023, the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee agreed a set of overarching principles that will guide the review of the Local Plan with the aim of submitting an updated Local Plan to the Secretary of State before June 2025.

The Statement of Community Involvement should be read in line with the Council's Communications Strategy and Community Engagement Strategy as many features of both documents align with the SCI.

#### **RESOURCES AND RISK**

The proposed amendments to the SCI were prepared by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the leadership of the Director of Planning within existing budgets. The SCI sets out the proposed approach to consultation which can have resource implications including costs of media publicity and any exhibitions or public meetings.

Without an up-to-date SCI, the Council would be unable to demonstrate how it will effectively engage with the community in relation to the review of the Local Plan and other Planning matters. This could lead to the Council receiving criticism during examination of the Local Plan for not meeting its statutory obligations.

## LEGAL

Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, provides that the Council must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, which is a statement of the authority's policy as to the involvement in the exercise of its functions.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) require Local Planning Authorities to review their SCI every five years.

## OTHER IMPLICATIONS

**Equality and Diversity:** The processes for consultation and community engagement in the updated SCI aim to give people equal opportunity to engage in the planning process, including 'hard to reach' groups.

**Area or Ward affected:** All wards.

**Consultation/Public Engagement:** The SCI was the subject of a six-week public consultation between 22nd January and 4th March 2024 to enable interested parties to comment on the proposed approach to community engagement and consultation on other planning documents and planning applications.

## PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is designed to set out how the Council will involve the community and other stakeholders in the Planning process, in particular when it comes to public consultation on the Local Plan and other Planning Policy documents. It also explains how the Council will consult communities and other stakeholders on Planning Applications and advises developers how best to undertake early community engagement prior to submitting their applications.

The Council is currently undertaking the process of reviewing the Local Plan for the District, which will guide new development in Tendring until 2041. The updated SCI will guide public engagement throughout this process, and compliance with the SCI is a

legal requirement that will be considered when the Local Plan is examined by a Government appointed Inspector.

A six-week public consultation was held between 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to give the community and other stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the consultation methods proposed. A small number of consultation responses were received by the Council.

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) prepared a detailed representation setting out the services they provide and provided general comments on their involvement in the plan-making system. Specific mention was made to those instances when EEAST should be consulted at each stage. The SCI has been amended at Appendix 1 to ensure this stakeholder is specifically mentioned.

Section 2 of the SCI sets out the process for preparing and updating a Local Plan, and the engagement that will be expected at each stage. The initial scoping stage of preparing the Local Plan was not included in this table, and has now been added to this final version – reflecting the engagement techniques that were listed for the comparable stage of DPD preparation at section 4 of the SCI.

Officers within the Development Management team have provided further advice on a number of aspects of public consultation undertaken for Planning Applications and pre-application enquires. The changes to the SCI include detailing how planning applications are advertised, clarifying demolition in conservation areas and pre-application advice. These comments have been reflected in the amended SCI.

A full list of representations and what changes are proposed are included in Appendix B.

Members are therefore being asked to recommend that to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, that he formally decides to adopt the SCI, as attached at Appendix A, on behalf of the Council.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)  
Appendix 2 – Table of consultation comments

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None