

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

28 MARCH 2019

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Report Title	STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Purpose of Report	To approve a final Statement of Community Involvement following the results of public consultation.
Decision(s)	Committee resolves to:- 1. approve and adopt the final Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix A) 2. approve the responses to consultees (Appendix B)
Consultation and Feedback	An eight week period of public consultation has taken place. Feedback from consultees and a recommended Council response is set out in Appendix B. Planning Review Panel has considered the draft document and responses received. The draft Statement of Community Involvement has been amended to take account of points raised.
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Adele Rudkin, Accountant Adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk There are risks associated with not reviewing and updating the current Statement of Community Involvement in terms of complying with national legislation and guidance relating to the preparation of the Local Plan and determining planning applications.
Legal Implications	The Council must produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out the Council's policy for consulting and engaging with individuals, communities and other stakeholders both in the preparation and revision of local development documents, supplementary planning documents and development control decisions. As consultation has taken place this should be fed into the decision-making process. Some evidence this has occurred is required, this is covered by Appendix B. Once adopted the Council must demonstrate how it

	<p>has used and complied with the consultation requirements set out in the SCI at the various stages of local development documents and supplementary planning documents preparation and development control decisions.</p> <p>The SCI must be reviewed every five years starting with the date of adoption of the SCI.</p> <p>Craig Hallett, Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754364 Email: craig.hallett@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Report Author	<p>Mark Russell, Planning Strategy Manager Tel: 01453 754305 Email: Mark.Russell@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Options	<p>Options are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve the final Statement of Community Involvement; or 2. amend the final Statement of Community Involvement.
Performance Management Follow Up	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed within five years of adoption. Revisions will be reported to both Planning Review Panel and Environment Committee.</p>
Background Papers/ Appendices	<p>Appendix A – Draft Statement of Community Involvement Appendix B – Consultation responses received</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications. The SCI should be published on the local planning authority's website.
- 1.2 The Council first adopted an SCI in November 2007. The SCI was subsequently amended in March 2009 to refer to electronic communication. However, subsequent changes to national planning policy and the constitution of the Council now require a new SCI to be prepared.

2. CONTENTS

- 2.1 The document sets out Stroud District Council's strategy for community involvement in the planning process. It sets out the ways in which we will inform, engage and consult people when we are formulating planning policies and considering planning applications and how we will give feed back to the community on the results.

- 2.2 The section on preparing the Local Plan and other policy documents sets out which specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in planning legislation, we will consult with, including references to the central role parish councils play in local communities and to the need to vary traditional consultation methods to engage with hard to reach groups. The section also sets out the variety of methods and techniques we will use to reach the intended audience and at what stage in the preparation of the relevant document we will use them.
- 2.3 The section on community involvement in the planning application process sets out the Council's approach to publicising and consulting on proposals at various stages in the process when a planning application has been received and validated, at the planning decision stage, and if an appeal is submitted. The approach highlights the role that the Public Access system can play in providing customer 'self-service' opportunities for information and to assist with making comments.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 There is no requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their SCI, but the draft SCI was subject to public consultation for eight weeks commencing 16 November 2018 and ending 18 January 2019. Consultation included:
- SCI sent to groups and individuals on Planning Strategy mailing list
 - SCI and supporting information published on Council website
 - Hard copies of SCI and supporting information made available at local libraries, town and parish council offices open to the public, TICs and Ebley Mill reception.
- 3.2 Responses were received from:
- Cainscross Parish Council
 - Canal and River Trust
 - Eastington Parish Council
 - Environment Agency
 - Gloucestershire County Council
 - Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
 - Hillesley and Tresham Parish Council
 - Miserden Parish Council
 - Natural England
 - North Nibley Parish Council
 - Persimmon Homes Severn Valley
 - Rodborough Parish Council
 - Woodchester Parish Council
 - Wotton Under Edge Town Council
 - 4 individual members of the public
 - Gloucestershire County Councillor

- 3.3 A summary of these responses, together with officer comments and recommendations is set out in Appendix B.

4. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE SCI

- 4.1 Most responses received relate to the Council's website 'Public Access' system and the growth of customer self-service to access and respond to planning applications. The Public Access system allows members of the public to create a search area of interest, be it a hamlet, village, town or the whole district. Whilst this needs to be set up initially, after this they will then be notified of all applications in their chosen search area by email. This provides for a more flexible approach to notification with the end user's specific interests and needs in mind. However, the SCI states that the use of neighbour notification letters as well as site notices to notify residents will remain for the present time and any changes in the future will be subject to further consultation.
- 4.2 Other responses refer to various aspects of the planning application process, including committee procedures, site visits and appeals. Whilst these processes are kept under constant review, there are no proposed changes at the current time.
- 4.3 A number of responses refer to the process for engaging and consulting with communities on the Local Plan and other planning policy documents. In response, it is recommended that the final SCI includes the following amendments:
1. Clarifying the types of supplementary planning documents that the SCI relates to
 2. Highlighting in consultation reports relating to planning policy documents how we have sought to capture the views of hard to reach groups
 3. Encouraging parish councils in preparing neighbourhood development plans to consult widely with local residents, businesses and other interested parties through the initial engagement process

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The final SCI will be used to ensure that future consultations on planning matters conform with the principles and procedures set out in the document.
- 5.2 The SCI will be reviewed at least every five years and more frequently if necessary to reflect any national legislative changes or proposed changes to local practice.