



Statement of Community Involvement Update

Corporate Priority:	Priority 1: Excellent services positively impacting our communities Priority 3: Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton Priority 6: Connected and led by our community
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	13 October 2022
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report is to seek the Council's agreement to adopt an updated Statement of Community Involvement. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the community will be consulted on planning policy documents and planning applications, stating who the Council will engage with, when and how. It also sets out how the Council will engage with communities who wish to prepare neighbourhood plans.
- 1.2 The SCI provides clarity on the extent of community involvement that will take place as the Council fulfils the range of its planning functions.
- 1.3 Public consultation was carried out on the draft SCI update for a 4 week period, with all relevant stakeholders and members of the public. The comments from these consultations have been considered in finalising the document.

2 Recommendation(s)

That Council:

- 2.1 **Notes the responses given to consultation comments as outlined in Appendix B.**
- 2.2 **Formally adopts the Statement of Community Involvement update which appears at Appendix A.**

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 Formal adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement update is sought in order to ensure that the document remains up to date in line with procedural changes which feed into the production and consultation on the Local Plan Review. This report has been prepared for consideration by Full Council because, once adopted, it will be a change to the Council's policy framework.
- 3.2 We have taken the opportunity in this Statement to reflect the technological changes which have increased the range of means available for consultation and engagement.
- 3.3 The four week public consultation from 13th October – 10th November resulted in 5 responses which were generally positive with some useful comments received. A summary of the responses can be viewed at Appendix B.

4 Background

- 4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement. From April 2018, under Regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), local planning authorities must complete a review of the Statement of Community Involvement every five years.
- 4.2 Additionally, the National Planning Policy Guidance states that 'a local planning authority may review and update their Statement of Community Involvement at the same time as reviewing and updating a plan to reflect what action is taken to involve the community in any change to the plan' ([Plan making, paragraph 071](#)).
- 4.3 In addition, monitoring of the SCI is undertaken to ensure that if any significant changes are required to accommodate changes in legislation or the way in which we consult, the Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed and updated accordingly. It is considered that an update to the Statement of Community Involvement is necessary to support a move to primarily online consultation methods.
- 4.4 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the key standards we will aim to achieve when involving the community throughout the preparation of Plan Documents, dealing with planning applications and engaging with communities who decide to prepare a neighbourhood plan.
- 4.5 There are three main sections to the Statement of Community Involvement, the first section covers how the Council involve the community within Planning Policy including within the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 4.6 The second section covers the Council's involvement and engagement within Neighbourhood Planning, setting out the Council's statutory and non-statutory roles in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 4.7 The last main section of the document outlines how the Council involve the community within Development Management, including the pre-application process, planning applications and appeals.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement update will ensure that the document remains up to date in line with procedural changes which feed into the production and consultation on the Local Plan Review.

5.2 Following Council's agreement in April 2022 to commence work on the Local Plan Review, it is necessary to ensure that the evidence base is up to date and that the Statement of Community Involvement is updated to reflect how we intend to consult with our communities.

5.3 Once adopted, the SCI will supersede the 2019 SCI.

6 Options Considered

6.1 Not to update the existing Statement of Community Involvement. This would mean that there would not be an up to date evidence base going into the Local Plan Review. This option was not considered appropriate as it is necessary to ensure that we are transparent with our intention on how we will consult our communities.

6.2 Adopt the update to the Statement of Community Involvement which will provide clarity on how we consult our communities and an up to date evidence base for the Local Plan Review. This is considered to be the necessary step for this project and aligns with the recommendation from the National Planning Policy Guidance.

6.3 Not adopt the Statement of Community Involvement update which would result in the scenario as set out in paragraph 6.1.

7 Consultation

7.1 There is no statutory requirement to consult on an update to the Statement of Community Involvement however, it was felt appropriate to do so to ensure that an opportunity was given for people to have their say.

7.2 Public consultation was carried out on the draft SCI update for a 4 week period. An article and press notice appeared in the Melton Times to notify members of the public and raise awareness of the consultation. An email was sent to all stakeholders to notify them of the consultation. This included Councillors; Parish Councils; developers; house builders; planning and land agents; registered providers; Homes England; the County Council; neighbouring Councils; Leicester City and Leicestershire Councils and relevant internal members of staff.

7.3 Only five responses were received to the consultation, all from statutory bodies or utilities. This is likely to be because of the limited interest of the document. A summary of the comments received is attached as **Appendix B**.

7.4 Two online consultation events were held via Microsoft Teams on 24th October 1pm-3pm and 2nd November 6pm-8pm. Only one person attended and provided positive feedback and reiterated the importance of ensuring that all consultations are inclusive and ensure that all members of the community can be involved.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

8.1 If the Council adopts the SCI, an adoption statement would then be published in local press, on the www.meltonplan.co.uk website. Publicity would be given to the adoption of the SCI.

8.2 The approaches to community involvement included in the Statement would then be implemented by all parts of the planning service.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The financial implications of the SCI being formally adopted will be met through the existing Local Plans and Development Management budgets.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Assistant Director for Resources

10 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 Adoption of an up to date SCI is a legal requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as set out in the Report. The current SCI was adopted in 2019 and is being updated to ensure that it remains relevant and provides up to date principles for engaging with the Community for the Local Plan Review.

- 10.2 When adopted the SCI must be published on the Council's website.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Deputy Monitoring Officer 02.03.23

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 11.1 Provisions have been included within the SCI for documents to be made available in other formats (such as large print, braille etc.).

- 11.2 Consultation events will be held at varying times and consultation materials and publicity will be accessible via several channels to ensure as many different groups and cohorts in the local community are aware of and able to engage in planning.

12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 No community safety implications.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 13.1 In some cases, there may be positive environmental and climate change implications arising from fewer in person consultation sessions and reduced use of paper and postage.

14 Other Implications (where significant)

- 14.1 The SCI contributes to the Council's efforts to be open and transparent about the community involvement that will be undertaken in delivering the key aspects of the planning service.

15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Don't adopt – we would be using an out of date SCI which may make other documents subject to challenges.	Low	Marginal	Low Risk
2	Risk from content of document.	Low	Marginal	Low Risk

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				
	4 Significant				
	3 Low		1, 2		
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Adoption of the SCI update
2	The relevant consultations have been undertaken in the preparation of the SCI update. The SCI will be reviewed at least every 5 years to update content.

16 Background Papers

16.1 None

17 Appendices

17.1 Appendix A – Statement of Community Involvement Update

17.2 Appendix B – Consultation Feedback form

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