

**Decision Maker:**      **Development Control Committee**

**Executive**

**Date:**                    **10<sup>th</sup> December 2015**  
**13<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**Decision Type:**      Non-Urgent                    Executive                    Non-Key

**Title:**                    **REVISIONS TO THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

**Contact Officer:**      Mary Manuel, Head of Planning Strategy and Projects  
Tel: 020 8313 4303      E-mail: mary.manuel@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:**        Chief Planner

**Ward:**                    (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

This report seeks Members agreement to publish the revised draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for public consultation for a period of six weeks. The current SCI was adopted in 2006. Since its adoption, there have been a number of changes to the planning system including the removal of need for an SCI to be subject to examination, the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The SCI has been amended to reflect these changes along with technological advances in the way we consult and the pressure on resources.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That Development Control Committee:**

2.1 **Endorse Appendix 1 as the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Executive to agree for public consultation.**

**That the Executive:**

2.2 **Consider the comments from the Development Control Committee with regard to the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).**

2.3 **Agree Appendix 1 as the draft SCI document for consultation.**

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
  2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres:
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost No additional costs
  2. Ongoing costs: Non-Recurring CostN/A
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Local Plan Implementation budget
  4. Total current budget for this head: £31k
  5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget for 2015/16
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 3
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Dependant on number of responses
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
  2. Call-in: Applicable:
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Borough-wide
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Council adopted the current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2006, when it was one of the statutory documents required to be produced as part of the plan-making process. Despite changes to the need for independent inspection, the SCI remains a legal requirement and sets out the Council's approach to the consultation undertaken as part of the planning application process as well as the Local Plan process.
- 3.2 Since 2006, a number of legislative and regulatory changes have taken place such as the Localism Act 2011, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013.
- 3.3 In addition to the legislative and regulatory changes, the consultation techniques need to be updated in the light of technological advances and other changes over the years – for example, we can no longer provide copies of documents on audio cassette. On the other hand, more residents are using the internet and social media.
- 3.4 Finally, the draft recognises the financial constraints under which the council is operating and suggests that resource intensive consultation techniques, such as focus groups and public meetings should be subject to criteria such as appropriateness and the availability of staffing and financial resources.
- 3.5 The revised SCI includes only slight changes to the way the Council intends to involve the community in dealing with planning applications, including the role of developers in that process. Paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) mentions that early and meaningful engagement should be used to consult with the community. The SCI suggests that developers with “significant” planning applications will need to engage the community with pre application consultation. Significant applications are those which are likely to produce significant public interest or controversy or likely to have a significant physical impact on the surrounding area.
- 3.6 The 2006 SCI was produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). Since adoption, the Planning Act (2008), Localism Act (2011) and associated Regulations have come into force and have introduced changes to the way Local Plan Documents are produced. The key amendments are summarised below:
- removal of the statutory requirement of the Preferred Options stage for the production of Local Plan Documents
  - introduction of a flexible participation stage as appropriate to the issues covered by the Local Plan Documents
  - removal of the requirement for the SCI to be subject to specific consultation stages independent examination and to be listed in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)
  - removal of the requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (except in the cases where the appraisal of the parent Development Plan Document has not covered all issues) and to be listed in the LDS
  - the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning – including publicity and consultation arrangements
  - the introduction of The Duty to Cooperate with named bodies and other local planning authorities
  - the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

- 3.8 The revised draft SCI has been written to address these changes and sets out the different stages of plan preparation, consultation arrangements and techniques for community engagement.
- 3.9 It is planned to consult with the public in early 2016 using the following consultation techniques:
- Council website
  - Press releases
  - Consultation portal
  - Notification by email or letter to people and organisations on our consultation database
  - Social media

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The SCI is a legally required document which sets out how a local planning authority proposes to engage with stakeholders and residents in the development plan-making process and planning application process. An up to date revised Statement of Community Involvement will provide clarity on how engagement will be undertaken with residents and stakeholders and that minimum requirements are met.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The cost of officer time and public consultation costs on the Revised Statement of Community Involvement will be funded from within the existing Development Plan budget. There are no expected additional costs to the council arising from the adoption of the SCI.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to produce a statement of community involvement.
- 6.2 There is no legal requirement to consult on a draft SCI but it is good practice to do so, particularly as the subject matter of the document is community involvement.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2006