

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 29 APRIL 2014

Title of report	STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
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Purpose of report	To advise members that it is considered that it would be appropriate to prepare a new Statement of Community Involvement.
Council Priorities	Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The production of a new Statement of Community Involvement will be met from within existing staff and financial resources.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	A failure to engage effectively and constructively in the preparation of the Local Plan and in determining planning applications could leave the Council vulnerable to challenge. Having an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement will help to minimise this risk.
Equalities Impact Assessment	The Statement of Community Involvement will need to be subject an equalities impact assessment.
Human Rights	None

Transformational Government	Not applicable.
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	On the advice of external solicitors, the report is satisfactory.
Consultees	None
Background papers	<p>National Planning Policy Framework which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications?topics%5B%5D=planning-and-building</p> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 which can found at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/pdfs/ukxi_20120767_en.pdf</p> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 which can be found at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2184/contents/made</p>
Recommendations	<p>(I) THAT THE COUNCIL PREPARE A NEW STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT;</p> <p>(II) THAT A FURTHER REPORT ON THE POSSIBLE CONTENT OF THE NEW STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT BE BROUGHT TO A MEETING OF THIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND;</p> <p>(III) THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENT ON ANY ISSUES AND APPROACHES TO CONSULTATION WHICH THEY WOULD WISH TO SEE REFLECTED IN A NEW STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that in the preparation of Local Plans *“Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential”*.
- 1.2 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 North West Leicestershire District Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

- 1.3 The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council will involve the local community, businesses, key organisations and others in preparing its Local Plans, other important planning documents and in processing planning applications.
- 1.4 Minimum standards for consultation on Local plans and Planning Applications are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 (DMPO). However, the Council has some discretion as to who, and how, it consults over and above these requirements.
- 1.5 It is considered that it would be appropriate to produce a new SCI at this time to inform the Council's approach to consultation on the emerging Local Plan.

2.0 WHY DO WE NEED A NEW SCI?

- 2.1 The current SCI was adopted in October 2006. A copy of the previous SCI is attached at Appendix A of this report.
- 2.2 Since that time there have been several changes to the Planning Legislation and Regulations that govern how plans should be prepared. In addition to new regulations (in 2008 and 2012), the Localism Act has introduced a new Duty to Co-operate and Neighbourhood Plans can now be prepared. These have changed the context in which SCIs operate.
- 2.3 Amongst the changes that have taken place is that consultation in the initial stages of plan production (Regulation 18) is more focussed, and there is no longer a formal requirement to consult until the Local Plan is 'Published' in advance of being submitted to the Secretary of State. As a result, there are fewer opportunities for widespread public engagement.
- 2.4 Previously a Council was required to submit its SCI to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. However, the Council is now able to adopt its own SCI (reflecting the spirit of 'localism' that underpins the planning system) without submission to the Secretary of State.
- 2.5 There have also been developments in technology to engage with communities. The amendments to the Regulations allow greater use of technology (social media and web-sites) to advertise consultation on planning documents and remove the necessity for newspaper public notices (which are expensive and often ineffectual). A requirement for some planning applications to be advertised in newspapers remains.
- 2.6 In addition, at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee it was agreed that it was preferable to move to producing a Local Plan rather than simply carrying on with the Core Strategy.
- 2.7 In view of these changed circumstances it is considered that it would be appropriate to review the SCI in advance of the new Local Plan.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Any changes to the SCI will need to be subject to consultation with any responses then being considered by Council before the revised SCI is adopted.
- 3.2 Before consulting on any changes a further report with a draft SCI will be brought to this Committee for member approval.
- 3.3 It is not envisaged that the approaches currently referred to in the SCI will necessarily be dramatically altered, but a review provides an opportunity to learn from previous experience both locally and nationally. For example, what (if any) should the role of public meetings be when consulting on the Local Plan? How can the Council work more closely with Parish and Town Councils and (if appropriate) any neighbourhood plan groups?
- 3.4 To assist in the preparation of this draft members are asked to advise officers of any specific consultation issues and approaches which they would wish to see reflected in a new SCI.