

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2014

Title of report	STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Contacts	<p>Councillor Trevor Pendleton 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To outline for members the responses to the recent consultation in respect of a new Statement of Community Involvement.
Council Priorities	<p>These are taken from the Council Delivery Plan:</p> <p>Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge</p>
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial/Staff</p> <p>Link to relevant CAT</p> <p>Risk Management</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessment</p> <p>Human Rights</p> <p>Transformational Government</p>	<p>The production of a new Statement of Community Involvement will be met from within existing staff and financial resources.</p> <p>None</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement will need to be subject to an equalities impact assessment.</p> <p>None</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	Consultation responses, copies of which are held by the Planning Policy Team in room 102.
Recommendations	<p>THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOTES:</p> <p>(I) THE RESPONSE TO THE RECENT CONSULTATION IN RESPECT OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT; AND</p> <p>(II) THAT A NEW STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET AT ITS MEETING ON 9 DECEMBER 2014</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will recall that at the 29 April 2014 meeting of the Advisory committee a report was considered in respect of the need to prepare a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Advisory Committee agreed that:
- a) The Council prepare a new Statement of Community Involvement; and
 - b) A further report on the possible content of the new Statement of Community Involvement be brought to a meeting of this Advisory Committee
- 1.4 A further report to the Advisory Committee of 3 June 2014 noted that it was proposed to undertake a consultation in respect of the new Local plan and the SCI in the summer of 2014.

2.0 CONSULTATION ON STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 Consultation on the Local Plan and the SCI was undertaken between 20 June and 19 September 2014.

- 2.2 As part of the consultation key stakeholders were notified of the Council's intention to prepare a new SCI and views were sought on a range of matters. In addition, a short consultation document (Appendix B) was placed on the Council's website and the consultation was promoted as widely as possible. Leaflets and posters were distributed via the Community Focus Team and in local libraries. In addition, the consultation was widely promoted on the NWL DC website and through social media.
- 2.3 Officers also attended three events to promote the Local Plan and the SCI, these were:
- Heart of the Forest Festival (Measham- Leisure Centre grounds) 21 June 2014
 - Picnic in the Park (Coalville- Coalville Park) 29 June 2014
 - Music in the Park (Castle Donington- Spital Park) Sunday 6 July 2014
- 2.4 A key aspect of the consultation in respect of the SCI was to try and gain a better understanding of how individuals wanted to engage in the planning process, both in terms of the Local Plan but also the determination of planning applications. The consultation document referred to above set out 12 specific questions, which were aimed at different sections of the community including residents, businesses and town and parish councils.
- 2.5 A total of 9 responses were received in respect of the SCI part of the consultation:
- 4 Parish Councils,
 - 3 agencies and bodies and
 - 2 members of the public.
- 2.6 A summary of the responses to each of the 12 questions set out in the consultation document is attached at Appendix A to this report.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 In accordance with the Council's constitution a new SCI will need to be approved by the Council's Cabinet. It is proposed that this will be done at the Cabinet meeting of 9 December 2014.
- 3.2 A revised SCI has not yet been drafted, but attached at Appendix C of this report is the existing SCI. The actual structure and layout of the document will be changed as considered necessary. In addition, the other changes that will be considered include:
- Updates to take account of changes in legislation, regulations and national policies (for example, by referring to Local Plans rather than Local Development Frameworks, revocation of the Regional Plan, reference to Neighbourhood Plans) as well as any local policy changes (for example Council priorities);
 - Reference to how social media will be utilised to enhance consultation and engagement particularly now that the Council no longer publishes the Vision magazine as a means of communication with local communities. Since the existing SCI was adopted there have been significant developments in the field of social media (e.g. Facebook, twitter etc) which provides a different way of communicating and engaging with people. The SCI will need to be consistent with the corporate approach on this matter. Where documents will be made available having regard to

the suggestions made in response to the recent consultation. The current SCI only refers to making documents available at the Council offices and other suitable places. It is considered that it would be helpful to be more specific about the type of places where documents will be available; and

- How the Council will engage in respect of consultation on planning applications, including the use of online consultation which was not available at the time the SCI was adopted and the use of e-consultation with Parish and Town Councils.

3.3 Once the SCI is adopted it will provide the framework which will be used for undertaking all future consultations on planning matters

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

LOCAL PLAN GENERAL

1. Are you aware of any organisations which may represent a specific interest that should be consulted?
 - 3 responses suggesting The Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds, Ashby Branch Labour Party and Parish Councils

RESIDENTS

2. Where else could we make hard copies of documents available?
 - 3 responses suggesting a number of locations including Ashby Town Council offices, Tesco Supermarket Ashby, Leisure Centres, Parish Council Offices and Post Offices
3. Do you agree with the suggested methods of engagement? Please suggest others or amendments
 - 3 responses suggesting informative articles in local newspapers, more road shows (for example outside Tesco's in Measham), a clear list of all meetings and information about ward member details should be available on website (easily accessible and not waded through lots of pages on the internet) and in paper form.
4. How would you like to be involved in plan making?
 - 2 responses received which identified taking part in Neighbourhood Plan development, responding to consultations, attending public meetings and through the Parish Council
5. What methods of engagements do you think work best?
 - 2 responses received, one replying that not sure so suggest all methods are used and one which favoured Face to Face meetings

TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS

6. Do you agree with the suggested methods of engagement?. Please suggest others or amendments
 - 2 responses agreed which suggested that the Parish Liaison meetings be increased to 4 times a year with specific meetings around the Local Plan added if required, all email correspondence to be acknowledged and responded to, a list of meetings and Ward Member details should be easily accessible on the website and

Parish Clerks to be advised of Local Plan Advisory Meetings and a copy of agenda and minutes provided.

7. How would you/your organisation like to be involved in plan making?

- 2 responses received which identified taking more notice of Parish/Town Councils when decisions are made, Parish Council's being fully engaged at all levels and through all stages and all information to be sent to Parish Council and in turn will endeavour to attend all meetings, and respond to all relevant parts of the consultation process.

8. What methods of engaging do you think work best?

- 2 responses received which favoured face to face meetings and direct and regular updates from meetings held at the District Council for example, LPAC, removing reliance of updates from ward members or having to trawl website to find information.

BUSINESSES

9. Do you agree with the suggested methods of engagement? Please suggest others, or amendments if you wish?

- 2 responses received one of which supported the suggested approaches and the other stating that it was good to see meetings taking place in the business sector.

10. How would you /your organisation like to be involved in plan making?

- 1 response received which suggested by inviting businesses to meetings

11. What methods of engagement do you think work best?

- 1 response received suggesting fact to face meetings

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

12. Are the consultation methods [suggested] appropriate? Please suggest other ways in which you could be notified of planning applications

- 3 responses received which suggested that whilst the methods were appropriate they could be improved, inform individuals automatically by email of all new planning applications in an area, use parish councils more as the people who live in the community and listen more appropriately to their views when voiced and site notices to be more visible to residents. There was also a comment on the current Pilot scheme for e-consultation with Parish Councils, and paperless planning applications, which it was suggested was not working and makes commenting on the planning applications very difficult. It would suggest that the original consultation methods be re-instated.

OTHER COMMENTS

- The Coal Authority is a specific consultation body which must be consulted on development plans.
- The Local Planning Authority has defined responsibilities regarding Neighbourhood Development Plans which should be set out in the SCI. Many SCIs now refer to the obligations set out for consultation in the 2012 Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulations. Under Schedule 1 this lists the prescribed consultation bodies, which include The Coal Authority.
- not all parish councils have offices at which plans can be viewed
- When responses from statutory consultees are received, the Council should post these immediately on their website along with the application details.
- Viability appraisals are critical in the determination of planning applications and there will be occasions when the public interest is such that it is reasonable and appropriate to make the details of viability appraisals generally available for public scrutiny. Therefore NWLDC must warn developers that any viability appraisal may be placed in the public domain, which is something, addressed in the Environmental Information Regulations.