

Scrutiny Paper

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Vale of White Horse Statement of Community Involvement

Purpose of briefing paper

1. To provide Scrutiny with justification for updating the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to reflect changes to national policy and legislation.
2. To provide Scrutiny with further detail on the SCI and current public consultation.
3. To set out the next steps in taking the SCI forward to adoption.

Background

1. The council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in accordance with Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the council will engage with communities who have an interest in matters relating to development in their area.
2. The current SCI was adopted in December 2009. This document is now out of date and needs to be reviewed to reflect changes to legislation, national policy, (e.g. National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance) and the council's working practices.

Summary of the Statement of Community Involvement

3. The updated SCI sets out how the council wish to engage with the community who can influence new planning policy documents and the ways to comment upon planning applications for development.
4. The document comprises of three individual parts that will assist interested parties who wish to become involved in the planning process. Information is presented in a way that is clear and transparent for the wider audience, and is

aided alongside a series of flowcharts and diagrams to help illustrate the council's practices and procedures for consulting on new planning policy documents.

5. Each part of the SCI covers a particular theme for community engagement and involvement. All of the parts together make up the SCI and once adopted, the council will use the document when preparing and consulting on new planning documents, and to assist the council when deciding on planning applications for development.

Part 1 – Getting Involved in Shaping our Future

6. Part 1 of the SCI provides a set of overarching principles that the council will be guided by when consulting on new planning documents. This document, in particular, provides information on how the council wish to involve the community when consulting on new planning documents and where planning documents can be viewed once they are published.

Part 2 – Getting Involved in the Local Plan and Planning Policy

7. Part 2 of the SCI sets out how interested parties can get involved with and influence the council as it prepares its Local Plan and other planning policy documents.
8. The document includes a series of flowcharts that set out the process the council is required to follow when preparing different planning policy documents. For example, it includes for example, the council's approach when preparing any new Development Plan Document e.g. the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Document and Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations.
9. This list is not exclusive, the document also covers a number of other planning policy documents.
10. A commitment is made in the SCI that states '*all planning policy consultations will run for at least two weeks outside of the school holiday period*'.

Part 3 – Getting Involved in Planning Applications

11. Part 3 of the SCI sets out how the planning application process works for major, minor and other applications and how interested parties can become involved and engaged in this process.
12. Information on the Developer Forum is included in the SCI to reflect the council's working practice for supporting agents, developers and applicants engaging with the local community in the pre – application process.
13. The document also sets out the council's minimum neighbourhood notification for all applications, alongside a diagram showing when neighbours will be notified where the boundary is adjacent to an application for planning permission.

14. Publicity and consultation procedures for the types of planning applications that the council may receive are set out in Appendix 1 of Part 3 of the SCI.

Public Consultation

15. Public consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and accompanying documents commenced on Wednesday 20 July 2016 and runs until Wednesday 14 September 2016.
16. The consultation lasts for eight weeks as it falls within the school holiday period, which is in accordance with the commitment set out in the draft SCI.
17. The SCI consultation document and accompanying documents are available to view and access from the council website and for public inspection at the local deposit points, including all local libraries and the council offices at Milton Park and Abbey House.
18. Copies of the consultation documents have been sent to the Town and Parishes and the specific statutory bodies.

Implications and Timetable

19. The consultation closes on Wednesday 14 September 2016. It is anticipated that the final version, informed by representations submitted to the council, will be adopted towards late autumn 2016.

Conclusion

20. Scrutiny Committee Councillors are asked to feedback any comments on the Statement of Community Involvement to the Cabinet Member for Planning Policy.