

## Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 August 2019

### Adoption of Revised Statement of Community Involvement



**Cllr Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth said,**

“The county council is committed to giving everyone the best opportunity to comment on planning decisions that might affect them.

“The Revised Statement of Community Involvement which we are adopting today updates the standards that we work to when we consult on planning matters.

“It explains how people can have their say about our Minerals and Waste Local Plans, as well as planning applications for quarries, waste sites, roads and schools.”

#### **Report Summary:**

The county council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how we consult with the public and other interested parties when we are developing our Minerals and Waste Local Plans and when we are determining planning applications.

We are required to review the document at least every five years, and that process is now complete. The revised document has been available for public consultation for 6 weeks, and now it is ready for formal adoption.

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that:

- a. The revised Statement of Community Involvement be adopted.

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Cabinet – Wednesday 21 August 2019**

### **Adoption of Revised Statement of Community Involvement**

#### **Recommendation of the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

I recommend that:

- a. The revised Statement of Community Involvement be adopted.

#### **Report of the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

1. The county council adopted its first Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2006, and a revised SCI was adopted in 2014.
2. Regulations came into force on 6 April 2018 [[The Town and County Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2017](#)] which require local planning authorities to review their local plans and SCIs every 5 years. [Planning practice guidance on plan reviews](#) states that: “it is important that Statements of Community Involvement are kept up-to-date to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. Therefore, a local planning authority should regularly review and update their Statement of Community Involvement to reflect any changes to engagement.”
3. We have conducted a review of the SCI comprising three main tasks:
  - a. Review of consistency with legislation. Checking for any new consultation requirements to be incorporated into the SCI and checking for commitments in the SCI that no longer have a basis in legislation.
  - b. Updating links. Ensuring that hyperlinks within the documents still work and lead the reader to the latest versions of the relevant information.
  - c. Comparison with the latest practice elsewhere: Reviewing recently produced SCIs from comparable authorities.
4. A revised draft SCI was presented to Planning Committee on 4 June and was subsequently made available for public consultation through the county council’s website for 6 weeks, from 12 June to 24 July, as required by the Regulations.
5. Notifications of the consultation were sent to district and parish councils within Staffordshire; County, unitary and district councils bordering the county; recent applicants for planning permission, and their agents. A total of 15 responses were received. 12 of these were from parish councils, 2 from borough / district councils, and 1 from a representative of the minerals and waste industry.

6. Of the responses, nearly all were supportive of the document in its current form, with at least 13 positive responses to each question. Details are set out in Appendix 2, along with the comments and suggestions made by respondents.
7. There were only a handful of suggested changes. One respondent would like longer to consider and debate their responses before replying to consultations, while another would sometimes like to receive paper copies, and another was concerned that libraries might not be able to maintain previous levels of support. They suggested that more training and support for parish councils would be helpful, and one proposed that webinars on major applications could provide a forum for the wider public to ask questions and raise concerns.
8. Though all responses have been noted, no changes to the SCI have been proposed as a result of the comments received. The need to avoid delay in the planning process makes it difficult to commit to lengthening statutory consultation periods, and both financial and environmental considerations make it hard to justify greater use of paper. Proposals for training lie beyond the scope of the SCI, and though webinars might justify consideration at some point in the future, it would be too soon to commit to providing them now.
9. The new Statement of Community Involvement is attached as Appendix 1 and is now ready to be formally adopted by the County Council.

### **Financial Implications**

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Revised Statement of Community Involvement – August 2019  
Appendix 2: Summary of consultation responses

### **Contact Details**

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