

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Cabinet - 9 January 2020

Report of: Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Development and Conservation Advisory Committee - 17 December 2019

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of the Community Plan

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Julia Thornton

Contact Officer Emma Coffin, Ext. 7315

Recommendation to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee: That the recommendation to Cabinet is endorsed.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That Cabinet adopts the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning.

Reason for recommendation: To update the previously adopted Statement of Community Involvement to provide an up-to-date reflection of our consultation methods for community involvement in planning.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This report explains the background to the production of a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and includes a revised version of the document for consideration.
- 2 The SCI is a statutory document that provides a guideline framework for development management and strategic planning consultations undertaken by the Council. It sets how and when residents and other stakeholders are engaged, focusing specifically on ensuring that consultation takes place during the early stages of the planning process. A variety of methods of engagement are put forward in the SCI, which the Council is required to review on a five yearly basis.
- 3 The current SCI was adopted in 2014 and, since then, there have been a number of significant changes to the planning system, in particular the revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2018 and 2019. This

refreshed version of the SCI reflects the requirements of the most up to date legislation and a number of ‘new’ methods of consultation and engagement.

- 4 Since the SCI was adopted in 2014, the Council has implemented a variety of new and innovative methods of consultation, including the increasing use of technologies. In particular, the revised SCI highlights the increased use of social media platforms, text notifications and technologies such as interactive tools and videos within planning consultations. All of these methods of consultation and engagement are now included in the document, which has been updated in conjunction with the Communities team.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 5 Once the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is adopted, it will be posted on the Council’s website and used to inform strategic planning and development management consultation processes. It is important to note however, that this does not restrict consultation, and the Council are always looking for new and innovative methods of consultation to improve engagement with the community.
- 6 As set out in legislation, the Council is required to review the Statement of Community Involvement every 5 years.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The Council could continue to rely on and adhere to the existing Statement of Community Involvement from 2014, however this is out of date, and does not reflect a number of consultation methods which are currently used. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

Key Implications

Financial

No additional costs to the Council arise from the adoption of the SCI.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

All local authorities are required to produce an SCI to set out their vision and strategy for effective community participation.

Equality Assessment

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty		
Question	Answer	Explanation/Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended	No	The Statement of Community Involvement is designed to ensure that Sevenoaks District Council effectively involves the

<p>through this paper have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?</p>		<p>community in the development of all documents, SPDs and DPDs that make up the Local Plan. The SCI also details how the Council consults on planning applications. The SCI aims to consider the needs and priorities of the whole community, and attempts to overcome any barriers which may prevent groups or individuals within the community from being involved in the planning process.</p>
<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No potential impacts have been identified.</p>

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2019

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services