

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 4 NOVEMBER 2021

TITLE: STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – APPROVAL FOR CONSULTATION

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARDWARE, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR STRATEGIC GROWTH

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This is a Key Decision
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I012850
Call-in Procedures may apply
This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- A** Approves the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (attached as Appendix A to the report), to enable it to be published for the purposes of consultation.
- B** Delegates authority to the Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth, to make and approve any minor or inconsequential amendments to the Draft Statement of Community Involvement arising from the statutory consultation.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** To approve the Draft Statement of Community Involvement for publication for a six week consultation period.
- B** To replace the existing SCI (adopted in 2014), which is now out of date in order to allow the Council to modify its consultation procedures.

BACKGROUND

1. A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how a local authority intends to involve the community in the preparation, alteration or review of local planning policies as set out in various Development Plan Documents or in determining planning applications. The planning system can be complex and the SCI aims to address uncertainty by setting out how the Council will engage with people at various stages of the planning process.
2. The preparation of an SCI is a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. Once adopted, the Council must follow the procedures set out in the SCI when consulting on planning-related matters.
3. The current SCI was adopted by the Council in 2014. Since then, there have been some changes which necessitate a review of the SCI. These changes will be published for consultation. Appendix A to this report sets out the revised SCI.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

4. The SCI has been updated to set out how the Council will consult on the various stages relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is similar to the consultation stages expected for Local Plan production and the methods in which the Council will engage the community are broadly the same. This includes the use of the Forward Planning Teams consultation database, letters and emails and the use of social media.
5. The SCI has been updated to make reference to the Quality Review Panel (QRP) and when it is appropriate for developers to engage in this process. The QRP provides independent and impartial 'critical friend' advice and design guidance on significant proposed development. The panel usually considers development to be significant if, for example, it is for groups of buildings, is an infrastructure project, affects sensitive views, involves significant public investment or is likely to set a future precedent. Development is usually referred to the panel by planning officers at an early stage, to identify and consider the key assumptions of the proposed design. Officers may also request a review once an application is submitted.
6. In addition to the above, the SCI now includes information on the pre-application advice offered by the Planning Team and information on how residents can be informed of applications in their area through the use of on-line mapping tools.
7. A significant change to the SCI is the inclusion of a pre-application consultation section which applicants are expected to undertake prior to the submission of their application. Pre-application engagement with the community is an important part of the application process and can often resolve conflicts and issues prior to an application being submitted. This could be through the use of exhibitions and presentations/briefings for major applications, or for the case of

smaller applications, neighbour discussions. A validation checklist has been prepared by the Planning Team which details what must be provided alongside a planning application in order for it to be made valid. It includes the provision of a consultation statement detailing what pre-application engagement has taken place. The validation checklist will also be published for consultation alongside the SCI.

8. Table 4.3 of the SCI (attached as Appendix A to the report) sets out the engagement methods that will be used by the Council when an application is submitted. This has been amended from the previous 2014 SCI to enable a more flexible approach based on the circumstances of individual planning applications. The Council will continue to use letters and/or site notices where appropriate. This still meets the minimum legislative requirements for planning related consultations and where appropriate and where resources allow, the Council will exceed these requirements.
9. Subject to any changes that arise at Cabinet, the SCI will then be published for a six week consultation period. It will be made available at the Civic Centre and local libraries. It will also be published on the Council's website. A consultation statement will then be prepared setting out a summary of the issues raised and how these issues were incorporated into the SCI.
10. The Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration will be given delegated authority to make and approve any minor or inconsequential amendments to the Draft Statement of Community Involvement arising from the consultation. The final SCI will then be placed on the Council's website and circulated to interested parties.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

As set out in the report.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

None specific.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

As contained in the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Community Wellbeing

As contained in the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance (Includes HR)

The proposed consultation meets the legal requirements as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Statement of Community Involvement

Background Papers

Harlow Local Development Plan - <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/harlow-local-development-plan/harlow-local>

Harlow Statement of Community Involvement 2014 -

<https://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/statement-community-involvement>

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy

HLDP – Harlow Local Development Plan

SCI – Statement of Community Involvement

QRP – Quality Review Panel