

Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process

Cabinet

Date: 20th March 2013

Author: Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, and Head of Planning

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1. To seek Cabinet's approval that the 'Swindon Borough Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process' be recommended to Council for adoption.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Commend Council to adopt the 'Swindon Borough Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process' (attached at Appendix 1) and authorise the Head of Planning to make it available in accordance with the arrangements detailed in paragraph 4.1 of this report; and
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Planning and the Director of Law and Democratic Services to make minor changes to the content of the Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability and the Cabinet Member for One Swindon, Localities and Housing, prior to publication.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, (as amended), requires each Local Planning Authority to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to set out how the community will be involved in the preparation, alteration and review of planning policy documents, and in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.2. The Borough Council's current Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in January 2007. Changes to the legislative framework, particularly the Localism Act and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, together with changes to the Borough Council's operating model on the 'Stronger Together' principles have necessitated a revision to the SCI and thereby ensuring it remains fit for purpose.

Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process

Cabinet

Date: 20th March 2013

-
- 3.2 On 17th October 2012, Cabinet resolved to recommend to Council that the Draft revised Swindon Borough SCI be subject to a period of public consultation. Following approval by Council on 8th November 2012, this consultation was undertaken between 13th November 2012 and 8th January 2013.

Comments received to the draft SCI

- 3.3 A total of 42 comments were made to the draft SCI and these mainly related to the following:
- Consultation procedures for the consideration of planning applications
 - Ensuring that relevant bodies are consulted during the preparation of development plans and in the consideration of planning applications
 - The availability of information to the public when a planning application is being considered by the Council, for example, copies of planning applications made to Parish Councils and the ease of downloading material from the website and completing online response forms.
- 3.4 A schedule of comments received on the draft SCI and officer responses to those comments is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The draft SCI has been revised where appropriate to address the issues raised through the consultation and the proposed final SCI is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Once adopted, copies of the SCI will be distributed to statutory consultees, including Parish and Town Councils. All consultees who responded during the consultation will also be notified. The document will be made available to view at the offices of Swindon Borough Council (Wat Tyler House) and at all libraries throughout Swindon. The document will also be made available to view on the Councils' websites.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Council could continue to rely upon the existing Statement of Community Involvement, adopted in 2007 which refers to planning legislation and processes which have since been changed. This document is out of date and no longer in line with best practice, and it would not meet the Borough and Governments aspiration for meaningful public engagement in the planning process.

Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process

Cabinet

Date: 20th March 2013

6. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications arising from publishing the Statement of Community Involvement are to be met from existing Forward Planning budgets.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 6.2 It is not envisaged that the content of this report will have a direct implication upon human rights issues, in so far as greater opportunities will be available to individuals to partake in the planning process. The SCI will seek to improve the quality of consultation for Swindon's residents and stakeholders, building on the principles of basic human rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 6.3 The Council has a duty to ensure that the SCI is in accordance with the sustainability principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

The SCI links to the Corporate Plan's priorities and objectives that have a spatial dimension, in particular the Community Strategy.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 6.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken and there are no significant implications arising from this report. The SCI will require that all sections of the community, including those that are regarded as "hard to reach" are engaged in planning matters.

Risk Management

- 6.5 There is a risk that the SCI will become out-dated to help avoid this, the SCI will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it fit for purpose.

7. Consultees

- 7.1 The Board Director Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property (Section 151 Officer), Board Director for Localities and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Cabinet Report and Minutes 17th October 2012, Item 54.
-

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Angela Clack, 01793 466370, azclack@swindon.gov.uk.

Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process

Cabinet

Date: 20th March 2013

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1: Revised Swindon Borough Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning Process
- 9.2 Appendix 2: Comments and Officer responses to the Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement Consultation

10. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan

- 10.1 This is not a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Forward Plan for March 2013.