

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	2 November 2020
Executive Member:	Cllr Gerald Cooney – Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment)
Reporting Officer:	Jayne Traverse – Director of Growth
Subject:	STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Report Summary:	<p>The Council's current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted 31 August 2016 to reflect changes to how planning documents are prepared and communities involved.</p> <p>More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic and continued progress on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) means it is important to reflect a number of more technical amendments to the SCI, ensuring consistency across Greater Manchester in the message delivered through SCIs about the GMSF.</p> <p>The SCI has now been the subject of a six-week period of public consultation which ended on Thursday 1 October 2020. The outcomes of this are presented, where appropriate modifications have been made and it is the final updated SCI which is presented here to be agreed for publication.</p>
Recommendations:	That it Executive Cabinet be recommended to agree to adopt and publish the revised SCI as set out at Appendix 1 .
Corporate Plan:	Community engagement is an essential part of the Corporate Plan, ensuring that the residents of Tameside, its communities and businesses are involved within shared decision making. The SCI helps to achieve this through the consultation and engagement mechanisms which are set out within it.
Policy Implications:	The revised SCI brings the Council's planning consultation guidance up to date. Local Planning Authorities must review their SCI every five years from adoption, as set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. This update ensures the Council complies with that requirement.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>Section 4.2 of Appendix 1 states that the costs of community engagement will mainly be financed from existing resources.</p> <p>However, alternative resource allocations will need to be considered should specific circumstances and additional costs arise. The related funding allocation will be need to be identified and agreed in advance should this be necessary.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	The Cabinet Office Principles and case law confirm that, in considering whether and how to carry out a consultation, public authorities should give detailed thought to what length of consultation and what methods of consultation would be appropriate in all the circumstances. The underlying principle of fairness should be at the forefront of the process. Public authorities should expect any decisions that they make to come

under scrutiny and should ensure that they have a clear set of reasons for structuring and conducting the consultation in the particular way they have chosen, having regard to the extent to which the views of those potentially eligible to be consulted have already been sought through public engagement.

It is noted that a press notice and press release has been published in a local newspaper to expand the reach of the consultation on the draft SCI to those who may not have access to digital methods of communication. The consultation has also been promoted via the Council's Partnership Engagement Network which has representatives from groups who promote the interests of people with protected characteristics. .

There needs to be detailed focus moving forwards on the exploration of further and creative ways to enable highlighted disenfranchised groups, such as older people, lower income groups to safely take part in consultation activities, so that meaningful consultation takes place.

The Statement of Community Involvement has a direct link to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, which is also currently subject to on-going consultation. The latter will be subject to examination and public inquiry and therefore relevant governance process will and should be subject to greater legal scrutiny.

Members need to be satisfied with the responses to the consultation and the changes made to the Statement of Community Involvement.

Additionally before proceeding to approve at Cabinet members need to be satisfied that the consultation has been as effective as it can be particularly given the circumstances.


Risk Management:

There are a number of risks associated with failure to publishing the revised SCI, namely:

- i. Failure to comply with requirements relating to the timely revision of the SCI at least every 5 years.
- ii. Increased risk of challenge relating to plan-making activities should the implications of the covid-19 pandemic not be reflected within the SCI and the SCI cannot be complied with, and a consistent position on the GMSF not be established.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Jeff Upton

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Consultation is an important part of the planning process. It can bring significant benefits by: strengthening the evidence base for plan-making and decision taking; ensuring community commitment to the further development of an area; promoting regeneration and investment; and increasing ownership and strength of delivery.
- 1.2 The current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in 2016. To comply with regulatory requirements, the SCI must be reviewed at least every five years.
- 1.3 Since that version of the SCI was published, there is a need to principally reflect on three matters:
- The Covid-19 pandemic, temporary changes to how documents are required to be made available under Regulations and how the Council is able to comply with its SCI in a socially-distanced way;
 - Putting in place a consistent message about the progression of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the role of the Combined Authority; and
 - Other technical updates since the adoption of the current SCI in 2016.
- 1.4 It is timely therefore that the above updates and amendments have been made to the SCI and that a revised version has been presented for public consultation..

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 While there is no legislative requirement for the local planning authority to consult when reviewing and updating the SCI, the Council did make a commitment to do so within its existing SCI.
- 2.2 Additionally, while the changes proposed were not of themselves considered fundamental, the intention was that following public consultation, these would become permanent rather than temporary changes. Therefore it was considered appropriate, given the expectations created and the timing of the consultation, to follow best practice guidance. The updated SCI was therefore consulted upon for a period of six weeks from 20 August 2020 to 1 October 2020.
- 2.3 A Responses Report (at **Appendix 2**) summarises the methodology used to publicise the consultation on the revised draft SCI; provides a summary of representations received; and the Council's response to the representations. In summary, no further amendments to the SCI are considered necessary following the careful consideration of the consultation responses.

3. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The revised draft SCI document was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken with support from the Council's policy team. The EIA seeks to ensure that the SCI is compliant with the relevant legislation. A copy of this EIA is included as **Appendix 3**. The consideration of the representations submitted during the recent public consultation has not resulted in the need for any amendments to the revised draft SCI. The EIA has therefore been updated to simply reflect the consultation undertaken.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Given the very recent impact on how we all live and interact, it is timely that a revision of the Council's SCI is undertaken. A revised draft document has been consulted upon and

the representations received in response have been considered. No changes are proposed to the revised draft document. The document attached **Appendix 1** is therefore recommended for agreement to be published as the Council's revised SCI.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.