


Report To:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	31 August 2016
Executive Member/ Reporting Officer:	Councillor John Taylor, Deputy Executive Leader Damien Bourke, Assistant Executive Director – Development, Growth and Investment
Subject:	STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Report Summary:	The current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted by the Council in 2006 as a result of the changes brought in by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Since that version of the document was adopted there have been a number of procedural changes to how planning documents are prepared. It is now important to publish a revised SCI that reflects these changes to statutory process. Following previous approval by Executive Cabinet on 29 June 2016 to consult on a draft SCI for a period of 4 weeks, the outcomes of this are presented, where appropriate modifications have been made and a final SCI is appended for approval to adopt.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the content of this report is noted 2. That approval is given to formally adopt the SCI.
Links to Community Strategy:	Community engagement is an essential part of the Community Strategy and therefore the emphasis of this in relation to plan making and decision taking is important.
Policy Implications:	The revised Statement of Community Involvement brings the Council's planning consultation guidance up-to-date.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment Scoping document has been prepared and is appended to the report. There are no identified adverse impacts arising from the assessment.</p> <p>The production of the SCI and the process for consultation and adoption is considered to satisfy the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the associated regulations.</p>
Risk Management:	By not adopting the Statement of Community Involvement the Council would be acting contrary to the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and subsequent revisions.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer, Paul Moore:



Telephone:0161 342 3108

 e-mail: paul.moore@tameside.gov.uk

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Consultation in the planning process is vital. It can bring significant benefits by:
- Strengthening the evidence base for plan making and decision taking;
 - Ensuring community commitment to the future development of an area;
 - Promoting regeneration and investment; and
 - Increasing ownership and strengthening delivery.
- 1.2 The current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted and published in 2006 in order to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.3 Since that version of the SCI was published there have been a considerable number of changes to planning legislation that have altered the way in which consultation on plan making should be undertaken:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
 - Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012
 - National Planning Practice Guidance 2014
 - Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2015
- 1.4 It is timely that a revision of the SCI is undertaken because it needs to reflect the up-to-date approach which is needed for consultation on both the Tameside Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF).
- 1.5 The objective of the revised SCI is to provide clear and concise guidance on how, who and when consultation will take place on these planning matters.

2.0 CONSULTATION ON PLANNING POLICY

- 2.1 The revised SCI brings the Council's approach to planning policy consultation up to date and incorporates the approach required for consultation on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.
- 2.2 The revised document establishes how consultation will take place at each stage of plan preparation, what material will be available and how to access it. Approaches may include traditional consultation methods such as direct letters, notices, press releases, meetings and events through to more electronic orientated mediums such as email, the Council's website and social media.

3.0 CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The SCI also covers how the Council will approach community involvement and statutory body engagement in the Development Management process, i.e. how the general public and specific statutory bodies are consulted on planning applications.
- 3.2 This is particularly important for the Council in order to identify the clear process for:
- Advertising applications;
 - Notifying neighbours;
 - Placing site notices;
 - Identifying how and when to comment; and
 - Identifying how to view application documents.

- 3.3 It is important that clear guidance is established and adhered to in order to reduce the likelihood of complaints relating to application consultations and the potential for referral to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 3.4 Therefore the SCI sets out what members of the public and statutory bodies can expect in terms of consultation process for planning applications.

4.0 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SCI

- 4.1 Consultation on the Draft SCI took place for a period of four weeks, from 1 July to 29 July 2016. There is no statutory period specified for consultation so a four week period for consultation was considered appropriate.
- 4.2 A Responses Report at Appendix 2 summaries the methodology used to publicise the Consultation Draft SCI, provides a precis schedule of all representations received and the Councils response to these. In summary the following modifications were made to the SCI as a result of the consultation:
- A Glossary has been added (appendix 2).
 - Manchester Airport has been added as a discretionary Specific Consultation body at **appendix 1**.
 - Greater clarity has been given as to how representations are expected to be made in relation to planning policy document consultations and how they will be treated once submitted (para.2.48).
 - A note to taking a pragmatic approach to assisting established groups in relation to Neighbourhood Planning consultation has been added (para. 2.50).

5.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The SCI draft document and consultation methodology were subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) in order to ensure that both elements are equality compliant. A copy of this EIA is attached at Appendix 3 for completeness. The period of public consultation mentioned above, inviting representations, has allowed for further refinement of the SCI although it is not considered these result in issues which require further substantive EIA assessment, the EIA nevertheless has been updated to reflect the consultation undertaken.

6.0 RISKS

- 6.1 There are risks associated with the current adopted SCI for both plan making and decision-taking as it is out of date and should be updated to reflect the changes to plan making regulations since 2004 and to establish clear guidance on public and stakeholder involvement in the decision-taking process.
- 6.2 With the emergence and accelerated work programme of the GMSF it is important that a revised SCI is consulted on and adopted before the next period of consultation which is currently scheduled for late 2016.
- 6.3 In terms of decision taking on planning applications there is a clear risk to the Council if a clear and transparent process is not set out on how the authority will engage in notification and consultation with the general public and statutory bodies.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Given the broad range of changes to the planning system since 2004 it is timely that a revision of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement is undertaken. The document attached at Appendix 1 'Statement of Community Involvement 2016' is for adoption following a 4 week period of public consultation and consideration of representations received as summarised above and appended in full.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 As set out on the front of the report.