

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

REPORT OF: DIVISIONAL LEADER FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMY
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: Yes
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Communities, Housing and Planning
Date of meeting: 29th January 2019

Purpose of Report

1. On 28th September 2018, Scrutiny Committee for Communities, Housing and Planning received a report on a proposed draft revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and a draft guidance note on the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs). The Committee resolved to ask the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning to approve the documents as suitable for public consultation in Autumn 2018.
2. This report provides a summary of the outcome of the consultation and proposals for minor changes to the SCI. The Committee is asked to recommend to Council that the SCI is adopted in accordance with the legislation and that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves the Guidance Note on PPAs for publication on the Council's website.

Summary

3. This report:
 - a) Describes the consultation undertaken on the draft SCI and Guidance Note on PPAs; and
 - b) Provides a summary of consultee responses and minor changes to the SCI which are proposed.

Recommendations

4. That the Scrutiny Committee:
 - (i) Considers the proposed changes to the draft Statement of Community Involvement in response to public consultation;
 - (ii) Considers the Guidance Note on PPAs and;
 - (iii) Recommends that:
 - a. The Council adopts the draft Statement of Community Involvement and
 - b. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves Guidance on the use of Planning Performance Agreements for publication on the Council's website.

Background: the Consultation Draft SCI

5. Members will recall that the Consultation Draft SCI and Guidance Note on PPAs were reported to this Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in September 2018.
6. Public consultation on the draft documents was carried out between Thursday 11th October and Thursday 22nd November 2018 in accordance with requirements of the SCI.
7. The following consultation media were used:
 - Notification to the 250+ organisations and almost 150 interested persons on the Council's planning policy email circulation list;
 - Publication on the Council's website; and
 - Copies of the draft document were placed to view in public buildings across the District.

Responses to consultation

8. A total of five responses were received to the consultation. This low level of response is not atypical of such consultation exercises particularly given the relatively technical nature of the PPA Guidance Note.
9. A summary of the consultation responses is set out in Appendix 1 together with Officers' responses to those comments. Two minor amendments are proposed to the SCI in response to a suggestion from Haywards Heath Town Council that early engagement with Parish and Town Councils is to be encouraged. This is agreed and appropriate changes have been suggested.
10. A revised version of the SCI, with the proposed changes annotated as tracked changes for ease of reference, is at Appendix 2.
11. No changes are proposed to the Guidance on PPAs; the guidance is at Appendix 3 for reference.

Next Steps

12. Under the District Council's Constitution, a resolution by Council is required to adopt the SCI. This will be the next step in the process, following consideration by this Committee.
13. The Guidance Note on the use of PPAs requires the approval of the Cabinet Member following consideration by this Committee. The Guidance Note will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and then published on the Council's website.
14. The date of both documents will be updated to reflect publication.

Financial Implications

15. There are no financial implications associated with adoption of the SCI. Publication of the Guidance note on the PPAs may encourage developers to enter into PPAs with the Council, which will help to resource the determination of planning applications.

Risk Management Implications

16. The Council is required to update its SCI every five years under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. If the Council does not adopt the updated SCI, it would be in breach of legislation and at risk of any action taken by Government or potentially an interested third party via a Judicial Review.
17. Although the likelihood of either of these events is low, the reputational risk to the Council should they occur would be significant. The Council could be accused of not taking its policy on engaging with local people seriously.
18. There are no risks to publications of the Guidance Note on PPAs.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

19. The draft SCI has equality and customer services at the core of its principles. In bringing forward community consultation and engagement activities, advice is given to officers (or private developers in working up development proposals) on targeting hard to reach communities and outreach work with them.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Summary of responses to the consultation draft SCI and Guidance note on the use of PPAs.

Appendix 2: Revised version of the SCI with proposed changes annotated as tracked changes.

Appendix 3: Guidance on Planning Performance Agreements