



18th December 2012

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER PLANNING

REVIEW OF NCC'S STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Committee of work underway to review the County Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The recommendation is for the report to be noted.

Background

2. The County adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in January 2007 following the relevant statutory process. This public document sets out the County Council's approach to the public consultation and engagement it undertakes in connection with its preparation of Minerals and Waste development plans and in the determination of planning applications.
3. A full review of the SCI was always envisaged, however the need for such a review has been prompted following significant changes in national legislation and planning guidance, progress on the Minerals and Waste development plan documents, as well as local factors such as the County Council restructuring and its increased emphasis on the delivery of cost effectiveness.
4. In terms of changes to the Development Management process, Members will be aware that both the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework issued in March 2012 place renewed emphasis on early engagement between developers and local planning authorities and consultation with local communities by developers in advance of submitting applications for certain developments.
5. In relation to the County Council's plan making responsibilities, the opportunity has been taken to review the SCI so as to ensure it accords with the latest plan-making guidance and terminology.
6. There is also extensive scope to make increased use of more cost effective means of communication in respect of carrying out the Authority's planning functions, particularly electronic communication and social media, although there remains an intention to make hardcopies available for those who do not have internet access.

7. It is also considered that by making changes such as these, the SCI will become of far greater relevance and use to the public in understanding how the County Council intends to engage with them.

Progress

8. In view of the need to review the SCI a report was considered by Environment and Sustainability Committee on 29 November 2012. That report highlighted various suggested changes to the current SCI and sought approval to undertake a targeted six week consultation exercise on the suggested changes. Environment and Sustainability Committee agreed to the public consultation exercise on the proposed changes. It is anticipated that the consultation exercise will commence early in the New Year for a six week period.
9. Environment and Sustainability Committee also resolved that, following the consideration of any responses to the consultation exercise, a further report be taken to Full Council seeking approval of the revised SCI. Following approval by Council, the updated SCI will replace the original version and become Council policy. It is intended that this Committee be informed as to the outcome of that process given its close links to the content and use of the document.
10. Members are advised that the proposed changes to the SCI can be viewed at the following link (agenda item 4 of the papers to Environment and Sustainability Committee):
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/78/Committee/16/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>
11. The suggested changes are highlighted in italics and bold for ease of reference.

Other Options Considered

12. It was initially considered that a less formal 'light touch' review of the SCI would be undertaken to expedite the process. However, given the scale and range of the changes that have prompted the update, a full review is considered to be the most appropriate way forward.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

14. It is considered that the proposed changes to the SCI will assist users of the document by containing more current and accurate information. Some of the proposed improvements set out within the updated SCI will improve the accessibility of information and will result in a more cost effective means of communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

SALLY GILL

Group Manager Planning

Constitutional Comments

16. The Planning and Licensing Committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference. (NAB 6.12.12)

Financial Comments (DJK 05.12.12)

17. The contents of this report are duly noted; there are no financial implications.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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For any enquiries about this report, please contact the report author.

W001041.doc – DLGS REFERENCE
PSP.JS/PAB/EP5356 – COMMITTEE REPORT FOLDER REFERENCE
6 December 2012 – Date Report Completed by WP Operators