

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the document as a basis for public consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The SCI forms part of the suite of new documents that local planning authorities must prepare as a result of the planning reforms introduced last year. It is one of the first documents that the Council will produce as part of the new system of plan production. It sets out how the Council intends to involve residents and other stakeholders in the process of preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) and determining planning applications.
- 2.2 The new system, and the range of documents to be produced, is explained in the Local Development Scheme that was considered by Cabinet on 17 March and 1 September this year.

3. THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 3.1 A key objective of the new planning system is to strengthen community involvement in planning processes. The SCI sets out the Council's standards for involving local residents and other stakeholders at relevant points during the preparation, alteration and revision of LDF documents and in the course of dealing with planning applications.
- 3.2 There are many techniques that can potentially be used to involve local residents and other key stakeholders. As a minimum the Council must comply with the regulations contained in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and advice contained in Circular 15/92: Publicity for Planning Applications. However, it is desirable to do more than what is set out in the Regulations, especially in relation to plan production to ensure that community involvement is effective.
- 3.3 Proposals in the SCI (attached to this report) aim to strike a balance between using additional appropriate techniques for involving people in the planning process and the potential

resource implications of doing so. Chapter 3 sets out the methods that would be used to involve residents and other key stakeholders in plan production and chapter 4 sets out the methods that would be used to involve them in the course of dealing with planning applications.

4 PREPARING THE SCI

4.1 The procedures set out in the SCI have been worked up in consultation with residents and other stakeholders. Information was gathered from through a number of techniques. A leaflet which had a questionnaire attached asking which consultation techniques organisations would like to see used was send out to approximately 1000 stakeholders and interested parties. It was also distributed with neighbour consultation letters on planning applications for a period of three weeks. In addition to this a meeting was held with St Ives Youth Town Council and two focus groups were held to discuss consultation issues in depth. A background paper detailing this research is attached to this report.

4.2 The draft SCI will be subject to full public consultation, following which a final version will need to be prepared and then approved by Cabinet for submission to the Secretary of State. These steps are statutory requirements; in summary the overall process and expected timescales are as follows:

- Initial consultation with communities and stakeholders (April – June 2005)
- Public consultation on Draft Statement of Community Involvement (October – November 2005)
- Statement of Community Involvement submitted to the Secretary of State (April 2006)
- Independent Examination into the proposals (expected July 2006)
- Receipt of Inspector's report (binding upon the Council) and adopted (expected November 2006)

4.3 Once the Council formally adopts the SCI it must comply with the standards of public participation it contains when preparing and reviewing documents that form part of the LDF and dealing with planning applications.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The draft SCI will represent the Council's approach to seeking resident and other stakeholder involvement in the process of preparing its LDF and determining planning applications.

5.2 The new system places considerable emphasis upon effective community involvement. The draft SCI will be publicised widely through the Council's magazine 'District Wide', newspaper

advertisements and the Council's website. The latter will also be used to host an 'interactive' version of the report which enables comments to be submitted electronically.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to endorse the draft Statement of Community Involvement as a basis for public consultation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

Local Development Scheme (HDC, 2005)

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