



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 4 June 2024

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Matthew Spoons, Economic Development & Visitors

Director Lead: Matt Lamb, Director – Planning & Growth

Lead Officer: Matthew Norton, Business Manager, Planning Policy & Infrastructure, Ext. 5852

Report Summary	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open report, key decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Statement of Community Involvement
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present to Cabinet for adoption the Statement of Community Involvement
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Cabinet: a) Note the consultation responses in <b>Appendix 1</b> ; b) note and endorse the District Council responses in section 1 of the Report; and c) formally adopt the Statement of Community Involvement set out in <b>Appendix 2</b> .
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	Do Nothing – as public speaking has been agreed, not updating the SCI to reflect this would not be appropriate.
<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	To ensure that the District Council is operating in accordance with the requirements of the SCI.

## 1.0 Background

1.1 A report was presented to Full Council on 13 February 2024, where Members agreed changes to the Council’s constitution to facilitate Planning Committee to allow public speaking. Planning Committee considered a report on 14 March 2024 where it was resolved to allow public speaking in accordance with the procedures set out within the ‘*Protocol for Dealing with Planning Matters*’. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provides the detail of engagement by the Council in relation to planning matters – both for plan preparation as well as consideration of a planning application as well as pre-application advice. Therefore, it was necessary to amend the SCI to address that public speaking has now been permitted.

- 1.2 Cabinet on 26 March 2024 approved a Draft SCI for public consultation. This included amendments to address public speaking and other factual changes since 2015. A six-week period of consultation from 8 April 2024 to 20 May 2024 was undertaken. Eight consultation responses were received to the consultation, and they are included in **Appendix 1** of this report (numbers in brackets refer to the individual comments). Of the eight responses received, five were from statutory bodies confirming they had no substantive comments on the proposed changes, a number were generally supportive. A response from Southwell Civic Society (008) was supportive of the changes. A further two responses were received one by a local resident and one by a local planning agent.
- 1.3 The response received from a local resident (002) stressed the importance of providing an opportunity for those without access to technology to respond to consultations such as this one. It is important to note that the Council are able to provide documents in multiple formats and receive responses posted to Castle House in line with the SCI. Therefore, it is considered that the SCI has already adequately addressed these points.
- 1.4 It is suggested by a local planning agent (004) that the SCI refers to outdated terminology being used in respect of reference to 'Local Development Framework' and 'DPDs'. The SCI has continued to use the terms Local Development Framework and DPD because this reflects the naming conventions that the Council uses for its development plan. Once the Plan Review is complete the council will commence production of a Local Plan under the new system based on the approach within the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act. As there is no SCI within the new system it is not considered necessary to undertake a comprehensive rewrite of this section.
- 1.5 A local planning agent (004) notes that Paragraph 3.17 sets out 21 days as being the consultation period for planning applications received, however this is incorrect for applications for Permission in Principle (PIP). Under Article 5G of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (inserted by the 2017 Amendment Order) the default consultation period for PIP is only 14 days. This is agreed and the SCI will be amended to reflect this with the inclusion of additional text relating to the statutory consultation period for applications for Permission in Principle.
- 1.6 Along with this change proposed in 1.5 a small number of changes have been made to the SCI, to reflect grammatical and drafting errors:
  - Removal of reference to 'Strategic' and replace with 'Significant' in references to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs);
  - Amendments to paragraphs 3.24 to make clear who can now speak at Planning Committee.

We have also include reference to the Mayor of the East Midlands as a consultee in Appendix 4 of the SCI.

- 1.7 Following discussion at the last Cabinet regarding the wording at 3.23 about applications Planning Committee usually consider it has been agreed following consultation with the Chair & Vice Chair of Planning Committee to retain the original wording that was proposed for deletion. These changes have been incorporated into a final version of the SCI proposed for adoption (See **Appendix 2**) and for ease these changes have been highlighted in yellow.

## **2.0 Proposal**

2.1 It is proposed that the SCI as set out in **Appendix 2** is formally adopted by Cabinet.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Financial Implications (FIN24-25/6555)**

3.1 No direct financial implications have been identified.

### **Equality and Diversity**

3.1 Because the updated SCI is not significantly different to the version adopted in 2015, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) of it has not been carried out. An EqIA is required by national policy to look at potential impacts on people with nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The District Council chooses to also assess impacts on other groups including 'socio-economic'.

3.2 The EqIA for 2015 SCI found that the impacts of the statements were likely to be positive on people with the protected characteristics of age, race and disability and also in terms of issues around homelessness. Impacts were considered to be neutral on the protected characteristics of gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief. As there were no negative impacts, the SCI is considered to be positive or neutral in terms of equalities.

3.3 Given that the only significant changes will allow a wider range of people to speak at Planning Committee, which is considered a positive benefit no further assessment has been undertaken.

### **Background Papers**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None