

13. REVISION OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CW)

1. Purpose of the report

To advise Members of, and to seek approval for, the updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Key Issues

- The Authority is obliged to write, publish and regularly review a 'Statement of Community Involvement' that sets out how it will involve individuals, local communities and stakeholders in the planning processes
- The last (2018) SCI has been updated for Members to note and approve. It corrects references, records minor changes to our customer support procedure, and for policy-making and decision-taking more clearly sets out the consultation process.

2. Recommendations

- 1. That members approve the revised Statement of Community Involvement (set out in Appendix 1) for public consultation.**
- 2. That any minor amendments necessary following the public consultation be delegated to the Head of Planning and in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee.**
- 3. That final approval for the SCI be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

- 3.** The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory requirement outlined in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It explains how the National Park Authority will involve individuals, local communities and stakeholders in planning processes. Once the SCI is adopted, all planning policy documents and the determination of planning applications must conform to the engagement processes described in the SCI.

Background Information

- 4.** The Peak District National Park SCI was first produced in 2006, and subsequently reviewed in 2012 and 2018. Some amendments were made temporarily to the SCI in 2021 to reflect changes in circumstances due to COVID, however, the 2018 document remains the current version.
- 5.** National planning policy guidance (para 71) outlines that local planning authorities must review their SCI every five years from the adoption date. This is important to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. The SCI should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to engagement.
- 6.** Para 35 of national planning policy guidance notes that there is no requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their SCI. However, the guidance notes that it is good practice for authorities to inform the public of their intentions to update the document and of the changes that have been made.

7. So far, the Policy and Communities team has undertaken informal consultation on the revised SCI with internal staff and the Peak Park Parishes Forum (PPPF), in preparation for undertaking a more formal consultation process.
8. The comments received so far are summarised in Appendix 2 to this report and the revised SCI has been amended in light of these.

Proposals

9. The draft SCI is included in Appendix 1. In line with national planning policy guidance, it is considered that the revised document results in a more concise and accessible document. It is acknowledged that the 2018 SCI has still been used as the basis for the document and it is intended that following adoption of a revised Local Plan, the SCI will receive a more comprehensive re-draft.
10. As well as updated general references and processes, and the correction of typographical errors, the main changes are:
 - A clear section outlining how the public are involved in the plan making process (section 4) and planning application process (section 6).
 - In para 2.5 the planning service and parishes accord (agreed in Nov 2011) has been included incorporated into the SCI, and the role of the PPPF has been defined.
 - In para 6.15 the wording has been amended to advise that people who comment on a planning application via letter or email are directed to the Authority website to view the decision.
 - Boxes and flowcharts embedded throughout the 2018 SCI have been incorporated into a processes table in Appendix 2 (for plan making) and Appendix 5 (for planning applications) of the SCI. All appendices have been moved to the end of the document.
 - Table 1, outlining methods for engaging in plan making, has been removed and incorporated into the processes table in Appendix 2 of the SCI.
11. With regards to the change to para 6.15 as referred to above, the Authority's Legal Team has advised that the Authority is not obliged to directly inform those that have commented on a planning application of a planning decision. The process has been amended to reflect this advice. It is now more efficient and responsive to the proposed reduction in staff resources, as the information is readily available on the Authority website.
12. Once approved the SCI will undergo an 8-week consultation process.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

13. The report outlines some amendment to processes which will reduce costs incurred by the Authority. The cost of the SCI consultation will be absorbed by the Policy and Communities Team.

Risk Management:

14. Having an up-to-date SCI is one of the soundness tests for the preparation of Development Plan Documents, hence reduces the risks at the examination stage. It is

important to be able to demonstrate how the standards have been taken into account in the planning processes.

15. **Sustainability:**
None

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

16. Issues surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion have been considered during the drafting of the SCI, as required by the Regulations, and additional requirements as per the Authority's commitment to engage hard to reach groups.

17. **Climate Change**

No issues to raise.

18. **Background papers (not previously published)**

None

19. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Revised Statement of Community Involvement.

Appendix 2 - Comments received at pre-consultation stage

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Clare Wilkins, Community Policy Planner, 11th May 2023