

**12 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT****Report By: the Forward Planning Manager****1. Wards Affected**

Countywide

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To inform members of the Statement Of Community Involvement (SCI) which is currently being produced. This document is required as part of the new planning system and will set out how the Council will consult on planning matters.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has recently introduced a new planning system which will affect the way development plans are made and how planning applications are delivered. This new system is intended to:

- Speed up plan preparation
- Be more effective in involving the community
- Produce shorter, more flexible plans that are more responsive to change
- Draw together those strategies of other agencies which influence the nature of places and how they function.

- 3.2 As part of this new system the Council is required to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) which is a folder of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that sets out how the local area may change over the next few years. Planning Policy Statement 12 provides detailed guidance on developing the new framework. The SCI will form an LDD when it has been produced.

- 3.3 This new planning system through its SCI looks to overcome the traditional reactive way people have previously become involved in the planning system by recognising that people who are affected by proposals should in the future be encouraged to participate more directly in the preparation of planning documents. This will help strengthen the evidence base as well as encourage a sense of local ownership and commitment to plan policies and their delivery. It is also hoped that this front loading approach will help to resolve conflicts and reach a consensus on essential issues in the early stages of the process, thereby reducing the time taken by inquiries and revisions in the later stages.

- 3.4 The framework explaining how the Council will consult on planning documents and planning applications is laid down within the SCI.

## **4. Aims**

4.1 The role and purpose of this Statement of Community Involvement is to:

- Identify who will be consulted on particular types of documents and applications and when they will be actively involved in plan making and in reaching decisions on planning applications;
- Set out transparent, accessible and meaningful approaches to community involvement in plan taking and decision making on planning applications;
- Encourage early involvement in decision making between the community, interest groups and stakeholders. This can help to resolve any conflicts early in the process and can generate a sense of ownership early in the process and on agreed outcomes.
- Recognise and understand the different needs of all sections of the community and stakeholder interests and establish the most effective means of enabling all sections of the community to make their views known and help shape planning decisions in their areas;
- Explain how the results of the consultations will be fed into preparation of local development documents and how those involved will be kept informed;
- Set out standards for the Council to achieve and explain how the process will be resourced and managed and how the new planning process will be co-ordinated with other community involvement and consultation initiatives undertaken by the Council.
- To ensure that the Council complies with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement when preparing its Local Development Documents and this compliance must be kept under review and revised where necessary.

## **5. Process**

5.1 The process by which an SCI is prepared is laid down in the by Government in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004. The following provides a summary of some of the key regulations:

- Reg 25 – Initial consultation: regional planning body, adjoining LPA, the Highways Agency
- Reg 26 – Draft SCI for public consultation
- Reg 27 – Consider and amend SCI as appropriate
- Reg 28 – Submit to Secretary of State
- Reg 34 – Possible public examination
- Reg 35 – Binding Inspectors report
- Reg 35/36 – Publish inspectors report and adopt the revised SCI.

## **6. Who Will Be Involved In The Consultation?**

- 6.1 The above Regulations and PPS12 (Annex E) set out those bodies that the Council must consult with on planning matters. In addition to these groups the SCI will identify all those groups which the Council will consult with as appropriate depending on the subject matter of the LDD or planning application.
- 6.2 The Council's understanding of the different groups and organisations within the County is based largely on those groups which it has had previous contact with over matters concerning planning and preparation of other Council strategies. The main groups are Central, Regional, Local Government organisations, statutory bodies, community, voluntary, resident and interested groups, members of the public, Councillors, Parish/Town Councils, Local Businesses, members of the Local Strategic Partnership, and Developers/Agents.
- 6.3 The aim of this SCI is to give everyone an equal opportunity to become involved in the plan making process and to ensure that no one is disadvantaged or precluded from taking part and making their views known. The SCI will identify those groups of people that are at risk of exclusion and will look at ways of involving them in the planning process.

## **7. Links With Other Strategies**

- 7.1 The new planning system aims to promote greater integration between the various strategies produced by local authorities and other organisations and the land use planning system. Links will be made between the Council's Corporate Plan, Community Involvement Strategy and its Customer Service Strategy as well as the Herefordshire Partnership's Community Strategy, the Herefordshire Plan. Whilst these plans and strategies will not form part of the LDF they will continue to be a major influence on LDD development within the County.

## **8. Community Involvement Methods and Techniques**

- 8.1 The dispersed population spread over a wide rural area raises particular problems in devising the most appropriate means of consultation to be used. There may also be problems in identifying representative groups to be consulted on behalf of ethnic minority or socially excluded groups, where fairly small numbers of people are involved. In order to widen the involvement of the community and especially those at risk of exclusion a broad range of methods will be used. In preparing the SCI a range of formal and informal community involvement methods and techniques will be included that address the community profile issues that exist in the County.

## **9. Timetable for production**

- 9.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) which forms a three year workplan for the policy section is required as part of the new planning system. The LDS has established that the SCI needs to be completed by July 2006. The timetable below indicates the various stages that need to be undertaken to achieve this end date.

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation of SCI database</li> <li>• Preparation of leaflet / questionnaire (i.e. pre-submission consultation) and list of consultees with covering letter</li> <li>• Piece of text on the website</li> </ul>
OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-submission consultation (6 weeks) [Reg. 25 (2)]</li> </ul>
DECEMBER 05 – JANUARY 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of responses</li> <li>• Prepare draft SCI</li> </ul>
FEBRUARY 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish draft SCI (i.e. formal pre-submission participation) [Reg. 26]</li> <li>• 6 weeks statutory consultation period</li> </ul>
MARCH – JUNE 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of responses</li> <li>• Responses made available to public i.e. web</li> </ul>
JUNE – JULY 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission to Secretary of State [Reg. 28]</li> <li>• Public deposit / public consultation</li> </ul>

## 10 Next stage

- 10.1 As the timetable indicates a first round of consultation on the SCI will be undertaken in October/November 2005. The aim of this consultation is to inform people of the new planning system and of the requirement to produce an SCI. In addition a questionnaire will be sent out asking for feedback on how Planning Services have consulted on planning matters in the past and how improvements could be made. This information will then be fed into the preparation of a draft SCI for Herefordshire which will be subject to further consultation in February 2006.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That it be recommended to the Cabinet Member (Environment) that the SCI be produced as identified in the report and in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.**

### Background papers

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004  
 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.  
 Planning Policy Statement 12