

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Geoff Blackwell

LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford

REPORT AUTHOR: Vikki Gregg

Summary: The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced many changes to the planning regime operating in England and Wales.

The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of the new Planning system. The Statement of Community Involvement aims to set down how and when the Council will involve the local community in the planning process.

Recommendation: Members are requested to approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation.

Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: One of the Core Values states that the Council will “put the community at the centre of everything we do”, the Statement of Community Involvement is a key document of the Local Development Framework and helps to deliver on all aspects of the core objectives.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): Assists delivery of a range of statutory objectives under social, economic and environmental banners.

Financial and human resource implications: Cost of production and adoption process to be accommodated within planning policy budget estimated at £1500 during 2006/2007.

Project & Risk Management: This is a statutory requirement.

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** N/A
- **Ward:** N/A

Other Ward Implications: All Wards outside of National Park are affected. The Lake District National Park Authority is the local planning authority for the Park and therefore has responsibility for the production of Local Development Documents including their Statement of Community Involvement. We have taken the SCIs of the National Park Authority and other neighbouring authorities into account when producing our SCI and tried to ensure, where possible, that there is consistency in approaches.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into effect in September 2004 and replaced the Local Plan system with the Local Development Framework.
- 1.2 The Local Development Framework will consist of a series of documents known as Local Development Documents (LDDs).
- 1.3 The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of the Local Development Framework. The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement is to set out the Council's policy in relation to involving the community in the development and preparation of Local Development Documents and in the determination of planning applications.

2. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 At the centre of the new planning system is the requirement to improve the way the community engages in the preparation of Local Development Documents as well as involvement in the decision making process for planning applications.
- 2.2 The guidance states that Local Planning Authorities should involve local communities early on in the Local Development Document process to seek early consensus on the contents of plans. Traditionally, community involvement in the plan making process would involve inviting comments from the local community on policies and proposals that were in a written format. The new system encourages continuous community involvement using a wide variety of techniques.
- 2.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act sets down minimum public participation requirements, which each Local Planning Authority must comply with for the production of LDDs. The Council will adhere to the regulations and where possible exceed these when both staff and financial resources allow.
- 2.4 The Council must comply with the Statement of Community Involvement when producing Local Development Documents, failure to do so could result in the document being judged unsound.
- 2.5 Prior to the production of the draft Statement of Community Involvement, a questionnaire was circulated to over 300 groups and organisations to find out how they would like to be consulted and which documents they would like to be involved in.
- 2.6 The results from the initial consultation exercise were taken into account for the production of the draft Statement of Community Involvement. The proposed methods of consultation are as follows:
 - Consultation Drafts
 - Copeland Borough Council Website
 - Presentations to Meetings
 - Topic-based Focus Groups
 - Neighbourhood Forums
 - Local Media, including Copeland Matters
- 2.7 Continuous community involvement and consultation can be extremely resource intensive in terms of financial cost and staff time. As outlined in point 2.4, the Statement of Community Involvement must be adhered to in the production of Local Development Documents or they may be considered unsound and withdrawn. The Statement of Community Involvement takes into account the variety of consultation methods needed to ensure that as many sectors of the

community are engaged in the planning process, whilst being realistic in terms of the resources available to deliver.

- 2.8 We will liaise with Corporate Communications to identify joint working opportunities and wherever possible, we will co-ordinate with other consultation exercises undertaken by other Departments within the Council and also external organisations.

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 It is considered the consultation methods identified within the draft Statement of Community Involvement are the most effective in engaging cross sections of the community, including under-represented groups, whilst being realistic in terms of the financial and staff resources available.
- 3.2 Subject to approval, the next stage in the production process will be to publish the draft Statement of Community Involvement for formal consultation for a period of six weeks. All comments received will be reviewed and any proposed changes reported to Council for a policy decision in November.

List of Appendices

List of Background Documents:

Copeland Borough Council Draft Statement of Community Involvement (available to view in the Members Room)
Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

List of Consultees:

Fergus McMorrow
Martin Jepson
Hilary Mitchell
John Hughes
Tony Pomfret
Steven Tickner
Corporate Communications
Hannah Kozich