

DRAFT SUBMISSION STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Geoff Blackwell

LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford

REPORT AUTHOR: Vikki Gregg

Summary and Recommendation: 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.

Members are requested to approve the Draft Submission Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.

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. SUBMISSION DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 At the heart of the new planning system is the requirement to improve the way the Council engages the community 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 content 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 from an initial Issues and Options stage using a wide variety of techniques.
- 2.3 The Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 set 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 As set down in the Regulations, the Statement of Community Involvement has followed a number of processes in its production. Firstly 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. The results from this initial consultation exercise were used to produce a draft Statement of Community Involvement which was produced in September 2006 and circulated to the database for comments. The comments received were considered and the Draft Submission Statement of Community Involvement produced.
- 2.6 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 followed 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.
- 2.7 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 The Draft Submission Statement of Community Involvement has met the requirements of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 in its production.
- 3.2 It is considered the consultation methods identified within the Draft Submission 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.
- 3.3 Subject to approval, the next stage in the production process will be to submit the Draft Submission Statement of Community Involvement to the Secretary of State, representations will be invited for a period of six weeks. Any comments received will be taken to and considered at the Independent Examination. After the Examination, the Inspector will produce a report which will be binding on the Council. The Statement of Community Involvement will be amended as necessary following receipt of the Inspector's Report and the final version reported to Council for adoption.

4. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 4.1 Cost of production and adoption process to be accommodated within planning policy budget estimated at £1500 during 2006/2007. An overall breakdown of the Planning Policy financing and expenditure is set out in the report on the Local Development Scheme elsewhere on this agenda.

5. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 This is a statutory requirement which is key to the production of all the Planning Policy documents to be produced by the Council.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 One of key aims in the Draft 5-year Corporate Plan is '*Creating opportunities for community involvement*'. 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 and 3.3.5 in particular.

List of Appendices

List of Background Documents:

- Copeland Borough Council Draft Submission Statement of Community Involvement (available to view in the Members Room)
- Copeland Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement - Consultation Report (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

(consulted in the SCI production process):

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

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed . This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Will be covered by appropriate planning policy documents.
Impact on Sustainability	All policy documents are required to have Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessment (Section 6 of SCI).
Impact on Rural Proofing	Consultation methods tailored to different communities including rural areas.
Health and Safety Implications	No direct issues.
Project and Risk Management	See 5.1 above.
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Whole essence of SCI is about inclusion and letting the individual have a voice.
Children and Young Persons Implications	Covered in paragraphs 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9 in SCI.
Human Rights Act Implications	Whole essence of SCI is about inclusion and letting the individual have a voice.

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision YES