

REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2021

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Housing, Environment and Regeneration
Officer Contact(s)	Julia Johnson, Planning Policy
Papers with report	Appendix A – Summary of SCI Consultation Responses Appendix B – Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2021

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>This report seeks approval for minor changes to, and then the adoption of, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) following a public consultation in July 2021 which was approved by the Council at the June 2021 Cabinet meeting. A summary of the responses received from the consultation and officers' response to those comments is provided as an appendix to this report.</p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory document that sets out how the Council intends to involve all sections of the community in the planning process and engage with local communities, businesses and other interested parties when developing and reviewing planning documents and determining planning applications. It will replace the Council's current Statement of Community Involvement which was adopted in 2006. The SCI establishes formal arrangements and standards to enable the community to know how and when they will be involved in the preparation, alterations and review of Hillingdon's Development Plan and other policy documents, and how they will be consulted on planning applications.</p>
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People; Our Built Environment</i> by supporting and encouraging community involvement in the planning process to achieve better planning outcomes for Hillingdon's residents.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Select Committee	Environment, Housing & Regeneration
Relevant Ward(s)	All.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Consider the summary of consultation comments and the Planning Policy Team's response to these comments, attached as Appendix A.**
- 2. Agree the adoption of the revised Statement of Community Involvement, attached as Appendix B.**

Reasons for recommendation

To ensure that the Council meets its statutory requirement to have in place an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Council could continue to rely on the existing Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted in 2006. However, this document is out of date as it does not reflect changes to legislation and planning policy and planning practice guidance since 2006. The existing SCI also does not take account of the latest consultation practices. This course of action is not recommended as this would not lead to the most effective involvement of the community in the planning process. The Council is required by legislation to review the SCI every five years and so the review and adoption of a new SCI is a statutory requirement.

It should also be noted that whilst the Council has a statutory duty to prepare and keep up-to-date an SCI, there is no requirement to consult on draft SCI documents prior to adoption. However, given the length of time since the Council adopted its last SCI and the scale of the updates it is considered good practice that the opportunity is taken to consult the local community before the final document is adopted.

Select Committee comments

The Draft Revised SCI was presented to the Environment, Housing and Regeneration Select Committee in July 2021, following the June 2021 Cabinet meeting. The Select Committee had the following comments as set out in the minutes from the meeting:

The Committee was requested to comment on the proposed SCI as set out in the appendix to the report (appendix refers to the SCI itself).

Regarding a query on how neighbourhood forums were engaged with under the terms of the SCI, the Committee was advised that there were rules for the formation of neighbourhood forums, including the minimum number of members required, together with ratification by the Council that the Forum was representative of its community. Once approved, such Forums could then be engaged as part of any relevant consultations. Regarding the format of how residents were consulted with on the matter of developments within their local area, legislation required that the Planning Authority produce a site notice

or that they advise neighbours, and while there was no set radius for whom should be notified, officers did have a level of discretion.

Members advised that some residents had complained that they had not been consulted on developments within their immediate areas.

Members expressed their view that further transparency on the use of CIL monies was required. In response, the Committee was advised that work was underway with the Council's ICT department to update its systems and create a new database, which would allow a greater level of detail to be reported as part of the annual CIL statement.

It was agreed that officers would provide further detail regarding any plans for the introduction of a refund to address damage to the public realm during constructions (e.g. damage to pavements).

RESOLVED: That the report be noted, and that the relevant comments made by the Committee be included in the forthcoming report to Cabinet.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

1. The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in accordance with section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council intends to involve all sections of the community in the planning process and engage with local communities, businesses and other interested parties when developing and reviewing planning documents and determining planning applications.
2. The SCI establishes formal arrangements and standards to enable the community to know how and when they will be involved in the preparation, alterations and review of Hillingdon's development plan and other policy documents, how they will be consulted on planning applications, any other ways the community can get involved in the planning process.
3. Following a June 2021 Cabinet Report which sought approval to consult on a draft version of the Revised SCI, the Planning Policy Team undertook a formal public consultation for four weeks from Friday 25th June to Friday 23rd July 2021. The Council also held a virtual meeting to allow participants to log in and discuss their queries directly with the team. A total of 11 written responses were received, the details of which are summarised in **Appendix A**.
4. For a more detailed summary of the content of the SCI, Cabinet Members should refer to the June 2021 Cabinet Report, as a background paper listed.

Revised Statement of Community Involvement

5. Following consultation, the Council has made amendments to the SCI in response to the comments received. Although the changes made are important, the majority of the content

and the general structure of the SCI has remained the same. The changes to the SCI are presented as track changes in **Appendix B** to this report.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report. The consultation process and revision of the Hillingdon Statement of Community Involvement has been undertaken by existing staff within the Planning Policy Team.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

7. The revised SCI (Appendix B) will be beneficial for residents and the community as it will identify how they can be more involved in the planning process and shape development in their area. The SCI is designed to provide the community with the information they need to get more involved in the planning process if they wish to do so.
8. It has not been considered necessary to complete an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment as there are considered to be no equalities or human rights implications associated with undertaking the consultation.

Consultation carried out or required

Feedback from consultation

9. A summary of the comments received during the public consultation and the Planning Policy Team's response to these comments is provided in Appendix A. Some of the comments received, however, are written below.
10. All statutory consultees and every individual/organisation on the Council's Planning Policy Consultation Database was consulted, with details also put on the Council's consultation webpage and advertised via social media. The team also held a virtual meeting which was open to all individuals.
11. The Council received written responses from 11 different individuals or organisations in total. Feedback was generally constructive and some useful suggestions were put forward, some of which have resulted in changes being made to the SCI. Where the team has not made changes as a result of the comments received, the reasons for this have been explained in the Summary of SCI Consultation Responses (Appendix A).
12. A couple of consultees commented on how the Council should be clearer about what they will do at different stages of plan-making, rather than stating what may be done. The SCI was purposely worded this way to allow the Council flexibility to try alternative approaches depending on the circumstances and the type and effect of documents being consulted on. It is understood however that some of the wording could be strengthened to show more clearly the Council's commitment to positively engaging with communities.

13. It was also suggested by one consultee that the Council set out more clearly policies on how to specifically increase the range of community groups it engages with. In response to this, we have stated that it is considered that the engagement techniques identified in the new SCI will help achieve this, however, the commitment to reach a wider range of community groups and targeting hard to reach groups will be reiterated in the report.
14. One consultee suggested the addition of a number of useful links to guides and information on different planning topics for the community. This advice has been taken on board.
15. Regarding consultation on planning applications, a couple of consultees suggested extending the consultation period from 21 days to 28 days due to days to respond being lost in the post, and people generally not having enough time to respond. One consultee also suggested that all amendments to schemes are consulted on, not just ones which the case officer consider necessary to consult on. Regarding the first point, we responded by stating that this is something that can be discussed but is beyond the scope of the SCI at present due to more thought being needed to be put into it and the resource and cost implications that would result from such a change. Regarding the second point, we stated that case officer's cannot consult on every change as there are limitations in terms of resources and that it must also balance ensuring community involvement with not unnecessarily delaying schemes. It was stated that planning officer's use their planning experience and judgement to determine what is a significant change to a scheme.
16. Other important points which were outside of the scope of the SCI were raised by consultees, as is evident in Appendix A, and these will be discussed internally.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and concur with the financial implications set out above, that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that the legal implications are included in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cabinet report and decision – 17 June 2021](#)