

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Planning Committee – 2 February 2023

Briefing to Somerset Planning Committees - Somerset Statement of Community Involvement Consultation

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1. Recommendation

- 1.1 For Committee to NOTE the content of the report and feedback any comments on the draft SCI.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 On 18 January 2023, Somerset County Council Executive Committee approved a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for public consultation. The draft SCI was produced collaboratively by all five Somerset authorities. The consultation will take place between 1 February and 16 March 2023.
- 2.2 Following public consultation, the intention is to then finalise the document to be formally adopted by Somerset Council as soon as possible following vesting day. The draft SCI is at Appendix 1.

3. What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

- 3.1 The SCI sets out how the Local Planning Authority will engage and consult with the community and stakeholders on planning matters. This includes consultation on planning policy (e.g. Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans) and the Development Management (e.g. determination of planning applications). The SCI therefore includes who we will consult through the various stages of Local Plan preparation, and what consultation methods we will use. In relation to Development Management, it includes details of consultees and neighbours who will be notified of planning applications and expectations for developers and agents in terms of pre-application engagement.
- 3.2 Many members of committee will already be aware of existing separate SCIs that are already in place within their separate Councils. These have been prepared at different times and reflect the specific planning functions of the different Councils under the two-tier system. With the formation of the new Somerset Unitary there is therefore a need to prepare a new single SCI for Somerset as a whole. This will ensure a consistent approach to how we engage with our communities on planning matters after vesting day.

4. How to feedback

- 4.1 As part of the consultation we are keen to hear the views of members of existing planning committees, so these can be taken into account in taking the document forward. Please therefore provide any feedback you have through discussion at committee. Alternatively members can email any comments to planning policy strategy@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk, or comment directly via the Somerset County Council online consultation portal when the consultation goes live on 1 February 2023.

Appendix 1 – Draft Statement of Community Involvement for Somerset Council