

Report Number:

# Somerset West and Taunton

## SWT Executive– 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019

### Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Draft for Consultation

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mike Rigby

Report Author: Paul Browning: Strategy Specialist

#### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Somerset West and Taunton will involve our community and stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and the consideration of planning applications within the Local Planning Authority area.
- 1.2 The Council also has legal duty to prepare an SCI under section 18 (Part 1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.3 This is our first SCI for the new Council and has been prepared to take account of changes to planning policy nationally, as well as learning from elements of the former SCI's for Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council respectively.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 With regard to the production of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), **Executive resolves to:**
  - Approve the contents of the draft SCI document (enclosed as Appendix 1); and
  - in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport delegate authority is given to the Head of Strategy and the Principal Planner Specialist to agree any necessary final amendments prior to its publication for consultation.

#### 3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

- 3.1 The potential risks that might impact on the preparation and timely delivery of the Local Plan and other Development Plan documents are set out in the "Risk Assessment" section of the Local Development Scheme.

## **4 Background and Full details of the Report**

- 4.1 We are required under various pieces of legislation (such as the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (the Act)) to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 4.2 This is our first SCI (enclosed as Appendix1). However, its contents are based upon the SCI's that were adopted by the former Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council in 2014.
- 4.3 Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 61-035-20190315) states that there is no requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their Statement of Community Involvement.
- 4.4 Consulting on the draft contents of the SCI is being seen by this Council as a mechanism to help the Council understand what communities actually want. It also keeps stakeholders and our communities informed that a review of adopted local plan policies has commenced.
- 4.5 The SCI will be used by the Council to guide the approach to the consultation undertaken in the preparation of its local plan documents. In line with current legislation, the SCI specifies the organisations which must be consulted on local plan matters.
- 4.6 In addition to meeting its statutory obligations, the Council is committed to ensuring that local groups, organisations and individuals are provided with the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of local development documents. As set out in the draft SCI, a variety of methods will be used at various stages of the planning process to enable community involvement in the preparation of local plans.
- 4.7 The Planning System requires the Council to determine planning applications for changes of use of land and buildings. The Council determines a range of applications (eg household extensions, listed buildings, changes of use, advertisements, major housing and business proposals).
- 4.8 The SCI thus sets out:
- The standards that the Council expects applicants to follow when making an application for planning permission.
  - How the Council will process planning applications and notify and consult the local community and stakeholders about development proposals; and
  - How the Council will consider and determine planning applications within the Local Planning Authority area.
- 4.9 As set out in the draft SCI, Somerset West and Taunton is also responsible for certain regulatory stages of the Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order process.
- 4.10 These Documents, when successfully completed, form part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area and are used to determine planning applications.
- 4.11 Whilst the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations set out who must be consulted at which stage, the SCI sets out the Council's expectations for all parties at the various stages of the regulatory process.

## **5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 5.1 Officers are in the process of preparing a new Corporate Strategy to replace those previously prepared for Taunton Deane and West Somerset. The Local Plan is an important document which will help articulate and translate the Council's emerging strategic objectives into planning policy.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There is an agreed budget and reserves to support the delivery of the Local Plan process.
- 6.2 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport and the Head of Strategy has reviewed and approved this report with no issues arising. Minor changes to the text were suggested and incorporated.

## **7 Legal Implications (if any)**

- 7.1 The Council's Constitution describes how Somerset West and Taunton will discharge its responsibilities, including responsibilities for the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan, which must be considered and endorsed by Full Council, prior to adoption.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)**

- 8.1 None at this stage. In order to comply with the legislations that govern the local plan process, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal will be prepared and consulted upon at key points throughout the plan making process.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

- 9.1 None at this stage.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

- 10.1 None at this stage. In order to comply with the public sector equality duty: an Impact Assessments (IA) accompanies this series of reports and agenda items on the Local Plan. Further Impact Assessments will be prepared in due course as part of the plan making process. Further, details of the process are also available from:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/>

## **11 Social Value Implications (if any)**

- 11.1 None at this stage.

## **12 Partnership Implications (if any)**

12.1 The draft SCI is in accordance with the Council's Constitution which describes how Somerset West and Taunton will discharge its responsibilities with regard to joint arrangements and partnerships.

**13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

13.1 None at this stage.

**14 Asset Management Implications (if any)**

14.1 None at this stage.

**15 Data Protection Implications (if any)**

15.1 None at this stage.

**16 Consultation Implications (if any)**

16.1 None at this stage.

**17 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)**

17.1 As per the published Draft Scrutiny Minutes;

17.2 During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors requested that the list of stakeholders needed to be checked as they had spotted some inaccuracies. Also, there were no provisions mentioned on how they were going to consult in the unparished area of Taunton.

**Resolved** that with regard to the production of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Scrutiny Committee recommended to Executive that:

- Executive approved the contents of the draft SCI document (enclosed as Appendix 1); and
- Delegated authority was given to the Head of Strategy and the Principal Planner Specialist to agree any necessary final amendments prior to its publication for consultation in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny / ~~Corporate Governance or Audit Committees~~ – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **~~Cabinet/Executive~~ – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Full Council – ~~Yes~~ / No** (delete as appropriate)

Reporting Frequency:  Once only       Ad-hoc     Quarterly  
 Twice-yearly       Annually

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Draft for Consultation
------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

### Background papers (links)

All documents relating to adopted Local Plans for Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/adopted-local-plans/>

Town and Country Planning Act (1990) can be viewed at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/contents>

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (the Act)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Planning Act 2008 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. can be viewed at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents>

and

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order (2010) can be viewed at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2184/contents/made>

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/regulation/18/made>

The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) (as amended)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

National online planning practice guidance can be viewed on the government web site at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

Note: For sight of individual background papers and more information on the supporting evidence base please contact the report author.

## Contact Officers

Name	Paul Browning: Strategy Specialist
Direct Dial	01984 600614
Email	<a href="mailto:P.Browning@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk">P.Browning@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk</a>

## **Appendix 1: Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Draft for Consultation**