

Council 28th July 2022

Report Title	North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement
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Are there public sector equality duty implications?	Yes	No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	Yes	No

List of Appendices

Appendix A – North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix B – Equalities Screening Assessment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report seeks a resolution from Council to adopt the North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as recommended by the Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. An updated SCI has been prepared for North Northamptonshire setting out how the Council will consult with local communities on planning issues and support the preparation of neighbourhood plans.
- 2.2. Public consultation on the draft SCI was undertaken for a period of six weeks during December 2021 and January 2022. All representations received have been fully considered in the final SCI, which is included at **Appendix A** to this report.
- 2.3. The final SCI, along with the schedule of representations received during public consultation on the draft SCI and amendments to the document following public consultation have been considered and endorsed by Members of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 24th March 2022, and also by the Executive

on 14th April 2022. The Executive have recommended the final SCI be adopted by Council.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that

- (i) Council adopt the North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement as set out at Appendix A.

Reason for Recommendation

3.2. To ensure the Council has an up-to-date SCI in place in accordance with government legislation.

Alternative Options Considered

3.3. Resolve not to adopt the revised SCI as recommended; however, the Council is required to have an up-to-date SCI in place setting out how the Council will consult on development plans and planning applications.

4. Report Background

4.1. It is a statutory requirement under planning legislation for the Council, as a local planning authority, to have an adopted SCI. The purpose of the SCI is to set out what consultation will take place with the community on planning policy documents and planning applications. It sets out who the Council will consult with, when and how.

4.2. There were previously two SCIs covering North Northamptonshire; one covering the former local planning authorities of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough, and the second covering the former Northamptonshire County Council function as the minerals and waste planning authority.

4.3. As a newly formed unitary Council that is both a local planning authority and a minerals and waste planning authority there is a requirement to have a new single SCI for North Northamptonshire.

4.4. A revised SCI has been prepared that relates to any consultation and engagement activities the Council will undertake as part of the plan making process, as well as for all planning applications that are submitted to the Council. It sets out the advice and assistance that the Council will provide to communities in relation to Neighbourhood Plans and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders.

4.5. The revised SCI gives some context to the local planning framework in North Northamptonshire, the plan preparation process in general, and who will be

consulted on emerging development plans, the periods for consultation and dealing with responses. In relation to development proposals and planning applications the SCI gives information on what types of proposals or applications are covered by the SCI, publicising planning applications, how 'significant developments' that are covered by the SCI are defined and dealing with the conclusions of engagement. Finally, the SCI gives information on the Council's involvement in publicising neighbourhood plans and also, as now required in SCIs, the advice and assistance that the Council will provide to communities in relation to Neighbourhood Plans.

Public Consultation

- 4.6. Following endorsement by the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 21st October 2021, the draft SCI was subject to public consultation for six weeks between 17th December 2021 and 28th January 2022.
- 4.7. There is no legal requirement for the Council to consult with the public when updating or reviewing their SCI; however, consultation has been undertaken to keep local communities informed and involved in the process, which is considered to be good practice and will ensure the document has greater credibility.
- 4.8. The following measures were undertaken as part of the consultation process:
 - Officers contacted 390 individuals and representatives on the North Northamptonshire Planning Policy consultation database, including specific consultation bodies; parish and town councils; community groups; developers, agents, landowners, and individuals that have expressed an interest to be notified of all planning policy related matters for North Northamptonshire.
 - Full details of the consultation, including a copy of the draft document and information of how to make comments, were uploaded to the Council's [Consultation Hub](#) through the Council's dedicated consultation and engagement team. Part of this process involved notifying members of the North Northamptonshire Consultation Register and the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel, which includes all individuals and organisations that have requested to be notified of new Council consultation and engagement activities. This was undertaken by the consultation and engagement team in addition to contacting the planning policy consultation database consultees.
 - Hard copies of the document and a supplementary information sheet were placed in the main North Northamptonshire Council Offices and Libraries.
- 4.9. The content of the SCI, and public consultation undertaken on the draft SCI, are consistent with the Council's [Consultation and Engagement Framework 2021](#).
- 4.10. The Council received 49 individual representations to the consultation from 15 respondents including individuals, community groups, organisations, and statutory bodies.

- 4.11. Representations strongly supported the principle of early and meaningful engagement through the planning process, as advocated within the SCI, along with additional community engagement where possible, increased use of social media and the advice and assistance offered by the Council in relation to neighbourhood plans.
- 4.12. The main amendments to the SCI following public consultation include:
- Adding specific and general consultation bodies for the purposes of plan making.
 - Identifying examples of 'hard to reach' groups for consultation.
 - Referencing and providing links to the Council's Consultation Hub and Scheme of Delegation.
 - Clarifying the consultation period for planning applications and the IT limitations relating to minerals and waste planning application comments.
- 4.13. Other minor changes have been incorporated where these add clarity or correct a typographical error.
- 4.14. The changes to the SCI following public consultation have been considered and endorsed by Members of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 24th March 2022 and the Executive on 14th April 2022. The resolution at Executive included recommending to Council that the SCI be adopted.
- 4.15. The final SCI incorporating all changes following public consultation is included at **Appendix A** to this report.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. It is a statutory requirement under planning legislation for the Council, as a local planning authority, to have an adopted SCI in place. There are no lawful alternative courses of action for the Council.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Local planning authorities are required to review their SCI every five years to keep the SCI up-to-date and ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. As such, it will be necessary to review the SCI within five years from adoption unless circumstances change requiring early review.
- 6.2. Once adopted, the SCI will be made available on the Council's website for public inspection.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

7.1.1. The adoption of the SCI will have resource and financial implications in terms of undertaking consultation and engagement activities for plan making and processing planning applications; however, these activities will be carried out by the planning policy and development management teams through existing budgets.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The SCI is a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The adoption of the SCI will contribute to meeting the Council's corporate objectives as outlined within the Corporate Plan 2021-25, in particular objective 5: Connected communities. The preparation and content of the SCI is consistent with the Council's [Consultation and Engagement Framework](#) and Corporate Plan objectives.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. There are no risks arising from the adoption of a new SCI; however, it is a statutory requirement that the Council has an up-to-date adopted SCI in place.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. National Planning Practice Guidance on Plan Making clarifies that a revised SCI does not have to be subject to consultation, but it is good practice to do so. Public consultation was undertaken for a period of six weeks between 17th December 2021 and 28th January 2022 on the draft SCI. Comments received have been fully considered and necessary amendments made to the final SCI at Appendix A.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. The Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel previously endorsed the draft SCI for public consultation on 21st October 2021 and following this have considered and endorsed the proposed changes to the document on 24th March 2022.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. None at this time, although the scrutiny commission could choose to add the work associated more broadly across planning policy into their future work programme.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed for the SCI in consultation with the Council's Equalities team and is appended to the report at **Appendix B**. This demonstrates that the SCI has a positive impact on identified equality groups.

7.9. Climate Impact

7.9.1. The SCI sets out methods to engage members of the public in the planning system, which will increase opportunities to comment on issues relating to climate change.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council will consult with the local community on planning issues and how the Council will support the preparation of neighbourhood plans. This will have a positive community impact as it will help local communities to shape the environments in which they live.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. None directly related to this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Executive on 14th April 2022 [Report on North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement](#) (Agenda item 9)

8.2. Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 24th March 2022 [Report on Statement of Community Involvement for North Northamptonshire](#) (Agenda item 4)

8.3. Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 21st October 2021 [Report on Statement of Community Involvement for North Northamptonshire](#) (Agenda item 5)