

## EXECUTIVE

### 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement</b>
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<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor David Brackenbury – Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	

### List of Appendices

**Appendix A** – Schedule of representations received during consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement

**Appendix B** – North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement – post consultation draft (including track changes)

**Appendix C** – Equalities Screening Assessment

### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To inform the Executive of the preparation of an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for North Northamptonshire and request that the Executive recommend the SCI to Full Council for adoption.

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 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 was undertaken for a period of six weeks during December 2021 and January 2022, with a number of representations received. These have resulted in some proposed amendments to the SCI to improve the clarity and usability of the document.
- 2.3. A full schedule of representations received during public consultation along with officer comments and resulting actions are appended to this report at **Appendix A**.
- 2.4. The revised SCI, including proposed amendments as track changes, is also appended at **Appendix B** to this report.
- 2.5. The revised document has been considered and endorsed by Members of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and this report is brought to the Executive for endorsement, but also to recommend the SCI to Full Council for adoption.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
  - a) Note the representations received during public consultation on the draft SCI and officers' response to the representations;
  - b) Endorse the revised Statement of Community involvement attached at Appendix B; and
  - c) Recommend to Full Council that the Statement of Community Involvement, incorporating the changes set out in Appendix B, be adopted.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations – To ensure the Council has an up-to-date SCI in place in accordance with government legislation.
- 3.3. Alternative Options Considered – Resolve not to endorse 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**

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- 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.

#### Consultation

- 4.6. Following endorsement by the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021, the draft SCI was subject to public consultation for six weeks between 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 28<sup>th</sup> 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. As part of the consultation, 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.
- 4.9. 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.

4.10. Hard copies of the document and a supplementary information sheet were placed in the main North Northamptonshire Council Offices and Libraries including:

- One Stop Shop, The Corby Cube, Corby
- Cedar Drive, Thrapston
- Bowling Green Road, Kettering
- Swanspool House, Wellingborough
- Tithe Barn, Wellingborough
- Corby Library
- Irthlingborough Library
- Kettering Library
- Oundle Library
- Rushden Library
- Wellingborough Library
- Burton Latimer Library (as requested by Town Councillor)

4.11. The Council received 49 individual representations to the consultation from 15 respondents including individuals, community groups, organisations, and statutory bodies.

4.12. The main areas of discussion were the IT arrangements relating to planning applications, details for clarification and requests to be included on the Council's planning policy consultation database for future related consultation activities.

4.13. A table outlining the full representations received to the draft SCI, officer's responses to the representations and the actions proposed as a result of the representations received is included at **Appendix A**. Further discussion on the representations and proposed amendments to the SCI is provided in section 5 of this report.

4.14. Public consultation undertaken on the draft SCI and content of the SCI are consistent with the Council's [Consultation and Engagement Framework 2021](#).

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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5.1. Representations strongly support 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.

5.2. The main proposed amendments to the SCI as a result of the consultation, include the following:

- Table 1, which sets out the specific and general consultation bodies for engaging at consultation stages for local plans, has been updated to include: town councils, parish meetings, lead local flood authorities, and civic societies.
  - Examples of 'hard to reach' groups are included at paragraph 2.16.
  - References and hyperlinks to the Council's Consultation Hub and Scheme of Delegation have been added.
  - Clarification is provided in paragraph 3.8 that the normal period for consultation on a planning application is 24 calendar days from publication.
  - Reference to parish meetings has been included alongside parish and town councils at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.10.
  - Clarification has been provided at paragraph 3.20 that the IT limitations preventing publication of all consultee comments relates specifically to minerals and waste applications, but that comments can be made available upon request.
- 5.3. Other minor changes are proposed where these add clarity or correct a typographical error. The full schedule of representations received during the consultation, officer comments to the representations and resulting actions and changes to the document are included at **Appendix A**.
- 5.4. The area Development Management teams have been consulted on the representations, comments and resulting changes to the SCI, to ensure a consistent approach is being taken across North Northamptonshire.
- 5.5. The revised SCI incorporating all changes proposed following public consultation, which are shown as tracked changes, is included at **Appendix B** to this report.
- 5.6. Members of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel have endorsed the proposed changes to the document; however, the Executive is asked to review the proposed changes to the SCI, which are considered to improve the clarity and usability of the document, and recommend the SCI to Full Council for adoption.

## **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1. Following review and endorsement of the proposed amendments to the SCI within **Appendix B**, the next step is for the Executive to recommend the SCI to Full Council for adoption.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **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 has been undertaken for a period of six weeks between 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022 on the draft SCI. Comments received are considered as part of this report.

### **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 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and following this have considered and endorsed the proposed changes to the document on 24<sup>th</sup> 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 C**. 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**

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- 8.1. Planning Policy EAP on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 [Report on Statement of Community Involvement for North Northamptonshire](#) (Agenda item 4)
- 8.2. Planning Policy EAP on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 [Report on Statement of Community Involvement for North Northamptonshire](#) (Agenda item 5)