

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1 This report sets out our Co-operative approach to developing a framework for community engagement relating to planning. The report also seeks Cabinet approval to amend the approach relating to the Development Plan Steering Group with its role being carried out through the regular meetings of Cabinet and Scrutiny.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation (See Appendix 1)
- 2.2 That Cabinet amend the approach relating to Development Plan Steering Group and approve that the approach will be through Cabinet and the Scrutiny Programme

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<p>All Council priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put our children and young people first • Protect and create jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' • Improve local people's prospects through education and skills training • Protect and support our vulnerable-children and adults • Ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained • Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities • Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work hard to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The document aims to encourage engagement with planning with all parts of our community including development and business sectors. It also specifically highlights how the Council will seek to engage with groups who have previously been less involved with planning.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	If approved at Cabinet in July then Public consultation will take place September – October 2012. The final revised document will be brought to Cabinet later in 2012.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	There are financial implications of adopting the Statement of Community Involvement. These are outlined in paragraph 6 of this report. JAC 05.07.2012
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	It is a statutory requirement under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the Council to produce a Statement of Community Involvement. Legal advice will be provided as required during the process.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The Statement of Community Involvement will provide greater overall clarity to encourage engagement and interaction with planning and also to reflecting the new streamlined processes pledged in the Business & Development Charter.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Statement of Community Involvement, which is a regulatory requirement in relation to development of the Local Plan, sets out the minimum standards the Council will deliver when engaging with the public through planning. The approach in practice will be to build upon this, with tailored and more innovative processes that ensure that we will be working with the community in the development of the plan. These activities will be specific to the different stages of plan making and pick up on new opportunities and best practice.
- 4.2 The Statement of Community Involvement will provide greater overall clarity for investors regarding the Council's requirements showing how to engage with the planning process embedding the streamlined processes pledged in the Business & Development Charter. The processes set out include updates to current approaches to planning engagement helping to achieve:
- the Council providing free pre-application planning advice on all schemes;
 - the provision of support from all teams within the Council in relation to Planning Application Workshops and advice.
- 4.3 In drafting the document teams from across the Council including Community Engagement, Corporate Communications, Customer Services, Equalities and Development Management have been involved. Their input has shaped the document and will be drawn upon in undertaking consultation on the document, in finalising the Statement and delivering its proposals.

Engagement with Members

- 4.5 Currently a small cross party Development Plan Steering Group is engaged with Officers working on the new Plan. The Group has no decision making powers, it's function is to provide advice to Cabinet on progress with the Development Plan. The Development Plan will play a critical role supporting and enabling the delivery of the Council's growth and inward investment agenda. It is therefore important that the Cabinet directly shape and drive the Development Plan.
- 4.6 It has also been identified by the existing Steering Group that greater emphasis needs to be placed on engaging with all ward members. This will ensure their local knowledge and experience shapes the plan and supports the involvement of communities across all parts of the Borough.
- 4.7 In the light of this it is proposed to change the process to that of engagement through the Cabinet and Scrutiny structure. It has already been agreed that Scrutiny will participate in the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which forms part of the overall development plan structure.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 In line with our Co-operative values the approach we will take is to engage communities in the planning process rather than simply seeking their views via traditional consultation methods at set stages which will help shape a much improved outcome representing the views of our communities.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The draft Statement of Community Involvement proposes a number of enhancements to existing planning processes, some of which have a financial implication.
- 6.2 A wide range of techniques will be utilised to improve stakeholder involvement in the planning process. Whilst some of these communication techniques will add costs it is envisaged that this will be offset by the increased use of an on-line consultation portal. Consultation costs overall will be contained within existing budgets.

- 6.3 Support to planning applicants will be enhanced through the provision of pre-application advice and access to a Strategic Application Workshop service for large development applications. The provision of proactive advice earlier in the planning process will improve the service provided and allow a more efficient use of available resources. These services will be provided, free of charge to the applicant, by existing officer resources from the appropriate professional teams within the Council. As this will impact upon the capacity of these teams to undertake chargeable works a review of the budgeted income targets for these services may be required.
- 6.4 The financial implication of the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans depends upon the number and nature of the plans. The costs, which are to be met by the Local Authority, will include the costs of preparing the plans, the independent examination costs and the costs of a referendum to endorse the plan. CLG have estimated that these costs may total upwards of £20,000 per plan. There is no budgetary provision for these costs and they will be taken into account as part of the budget strategy for future years.
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7. PREVIOUS MINUTES

N/A

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

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