

Somerset West and Taunton Council

SWT Executive – 20 November 2019

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): consideration of comments submitted on draft document

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 has legal duty to prepare an SCI under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.3 We consulted on our first Statement of Community Involvement between 19 July and 30 September 2019. This report summarises the comments made during this period and how these responses have been addressed. Prior to publication, executive is asked to approve minor updates to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 With regard to the production of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), **Executive resolves to:**
 - Approve the proposed response to matters raised by the respondents (as set out in 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.

3 Risk Assessment

- 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 the “Risk Assessment section of the Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 The risks associated with the SCI are set out in the table below.

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act remains the legal driver under which SCIs are produced. SCIs are no longer examined by an independent Inspector. There is also no legal requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their SCI's. SCI's can create fertile ground for legal challenge if promises and expectations set out within them go unfulfilled.	Rare (1)	Moderate (3)	Low (3)

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 Members will recall that the draft SCI was approved for public consultation at Executive on the 9th July 2019. A copy of this document is available on our web site at: <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/>

How did SWT consult on the draft SCI?

- 4.3 This was our first SCI. Its contents were based upon the SCI's that were adopted by the former Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council in 2014.
- 4.4 SWT consulted on the draft SCI between 19 July and 30 September 2019. All the various stakeholders on our local plans data base (eg statutory and non statutory organisations, parish councils, parish and town councils, bodies representing interests of minority and disabled groups) were informed about the publication of the draft SCI and invited to comment.
- 4.5 During normal office hours, paper copies of the document were be available to view in the reception of the Council offices at Deane House, Taunton and West Somerset House, Williton. The document and feedback form could also be viewed online at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/>.

Responses received and proposed response on matters raised

- 4.6 Nine responses raising various matters were received during the consultation period on the draft SCI. A summary of the representations made is enclosed as Appendix 1. Where appropriate, the matters raised by the respondent are

accompanied by a proposed response from SWT on how each representation will be addressed.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 A new Corporate Strategy to replace those previously prepared for Taunton Deane and West Somerset was approved at Full Council on the 8th October 2019. The Local Plan is an important document which will help articulate and translate the Council's emerging strategic objectives into planning policy. This decision is linked to delivering outcomes of:

- **Priority theme 1. Our environment and economy.** A low-carbon, clean, green and prosperous district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and encourages healthy lifestyles.
- **Priority theme 2. A transparent and customer-focused Council.** A Council which informs and engages openly with our stakeholders and which consistently delivers excellent customer service.

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.

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 Climate and Sustainability Implications

8.1 No direct impact on delivering our carbon reduction target (carbon neutral by 2030).

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

9.1 None at this stage.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

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 SCI and 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 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 A verbal update will be given to Executive.

Democratic Path:

- ~~Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No~~
- ~~Cabinet/Executive – Yes / No~~
- ~~Full Council – Yes / No~~

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

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Schedule of Representations submitted on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019)
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Background papers (links)

Documents relating to the draft Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed at <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/planning-policy/statement-of-community-involvement/>

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/>

The National Planning Policy Framework can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2#history>

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

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

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

Government advice and criteria for assessing local planning authority performance in determining planning applications

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-planning-performance-criteria-for-designation>

[The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015m \(as amended\),](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made>

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

Contact Officers

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