

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 May 2023</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Draft Statement of Community Involvement</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Draft Statement of Community Involvement</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and approval to undertake a public consultation.
- 1.2 The SCI is a document required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It sets out the council's principles and requirements for involving the community and stakeholders in both preparing and revising planning documents and in the consideration of planning applications.
- 1.3 The SCI also informs the community what the council's roles and responsibilities are regarding neighbourhood plans, should a community wish to prepare one.

### 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the content of the draft Statement of Community Involvement be endorsed
- (2) the draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation be approved
- (3) authority be delegated for the correction of any errors such as spelling, grammar, referencing and formatting to the Planning Policy Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing and Planning.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The City Council's last SCI was adopted in 2015 and requires updating to reflect current regulations and the changing ways in which we all communicate.

- 3.2 The SCI promotes early engagement in planning and ensures that the public will be well informed of planning matters. Early engagement can foster a sense of ownership, understanding and positively shape place making.
- 3.3 The SCI sets out for both plan making and decision taking who we will inform, when, by what method, and what will be done with any comments received.
- 3.4 For plan making (Planning Policy) it informs the community and key stakeholders of the formal consultation processes we will undertake in producing Development Plan Documents, such as the emerging Joint Strategic Plan, and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 3.5 The SCI explains what each stage of plan making involves, who the key consultees are, the consultation methods and tools we may use, how people may put forward their comments and ideas, and what we will do in response.
- 3.6 It sets out a number of potential consultation methods and when they might be used. It commits the council to involving a wide range of individuals and organisations, including the local community, stakeholders and 'harder to reach' groups. It is important that the needs of those groups of people who do not usually get involved in the process, and who may have specific needs to be met or addressed, are able to get involved if they wish.
- 3.7 The SCI sets the framework for consultation and engagement with the community and stakeholders. In addition, consultations undertaken during the plan making process will be individually designed with the Community Wellbeing Team to ensure they are relevant, appropriate and responsive to their nature and scope.
- 3.8 For decision taking (planning applications – Development Management), the SCI sets out what consultation and notification will take place depending on the type and scale of application. In all cases the council will meet the minimum requirements and, in some cases, exceed them. For example, there are no requirements to notify the public of reserved matters applications. However, a reserved matters application could contain a lot of detail such as the layout and design of new development. The SCI therefore requires that a reserved matters application be treated like a full planning application with neighbours notified accordingly and invited to comment.
- 3.9 The SCI also sets out what role the council as Local Planning Authority will take in supporting neighbourhood planning matters.
- 3.11 Whilst it isn't a legal requirement for local authorities to consult on their SCI, the City Council is keen to ensure that the community and stakeholders are given the opportunity to comment on how they would like to be engaged in the preparation of planning documents and in major planning applications. The consultation will also provide an opportunity for people and organisations to come forward to be added to the planning policy consultation database.

#### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

- 4.1 There are no social value implications as a result of this report.

## **5.0 Environmental Implications**

- 5.1 The SCI is fairly neutral in terms of environmental implications. There is the potential to save some paper and printing with a reduced number of hard copy documents.
- 5.3 It is the content of the consultations themselves, not a matter for the SCI, that has the potential for wider impact in terms of producing better quality developments and policies to ensure planning contributes to the council's climate targets.

## **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 6.1 No action could be taken which would result in a conflict with the regulatory requirements.

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Council is required to have an adopted SCI by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 section 18. The last SCI was adopted in 2015 and therefore in need of updating.

## **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 8.1 Following approval by Cabinet the SCI will undergo a 6-week public consultation. All responses will be considered and the SCI amended where appropriate.
- 8.2 The SCI will then progress onto Council where it will be considered for adoption later this year.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 Having an up-to-date SCI will facilitate a modest saving in terms of printing costs. The current 2015 SCI requires a paper copy of the plan and supporting information to be sent to every library across the city. For the last plan consultation (Gloucester City Plan Main Modifications) this cost was approximately £800. The GCP has been out on regulatory consultations six times.
- 9.2 All libraries across the city have computers, staff that can help people use the computer and print relevant information. A paper copy of consultation materials will always be available to view at the council's main reception as per the regulations.
- 9.3 As is currently the case, any financial requirements for consultation will be fed into the annual budget for Development Management, Planning Policy or the Joint Strategic Plan as appropriate.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

- 10.1 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires all local planning authorities to adopt an SCI. This has to take into account the following requirements:

1. (a) Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, which states that a “statement of community involvement must set out the local planning authority’s policies for giving advice and assistance” in relation to Neighbourhood Planning. This requirement came into force on 31 July 2018.
  2. (b) Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 came into force on 6th April 2018 and requires a local planning authority to review a SCI “every five years, starting from the date of adoption of the statement of community involvement.”
- 10.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) do not require a revised SCI to go through an examination process.
- 10.3 The revised SCI sets out how the Council will meet the statutory requirements for consulting on various types of planning documents and through the development management process.
- 10.4 When adopted, the SCI must be published on the Council’s website.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

#### **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 11.1 As set out above, the Council is required an produce and review an SCI up to date SCI in accordance with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- 11.2 Risk assessments will be used as applicable at the time of planning any public consultation events.

#### **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

#### **13.0 Community Safety Implications**

- 13.1 No known community safety implications.

#### **14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

- 14.1 No known staffing or union implications.

**Background Documents:** None