

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 14th October 2019

Wards: All

Subject: Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director for Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing;

Contact officer, Ann Maria Clarke, Strategic Planner, Future Merton

Recommendations:

That, following recommendations from the Borough Plan Advisory Panel (BPAC) on 12th September 2019,

- A. That, following the recommendations of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee on 12th September 2019, Cabinet resolve to agree BPAC's recommendation to revise Merton's Statement of Community Involvement 2006.
 - B. Cabinet approve a six week consultation on the new Statement of Community Involvement, to run for six weeks in winter 2019/20.
 - C. That approval for the final consultation documents be delegated to the Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing.
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1. Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1 Merton's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will involve local people, local businesses, stakeholders and other interested parties when preparing development planning documents and submitted planning applications. SCI's are a legal requirement and form part of the evidence based documents that supports Local Plans.
- 1.2 In addition, the draft SCI also outlines some engagement principles for developers, who may need to consult with Merton residents regard their development proposals.
- 1.3 Merton's SCI was last revised in 2006. This report recommends a public consultation on a new draft of Merton's SCI.

BPAC recommendations

- 1.4 On the 12th September 2019, Merton's Borough Plan Advisory Committee resolved to recommend that Cabinet support a six week public consultation on Merton's draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for a six week public consultation in winter 2019/20, subject to the following amendments
- That the final consultation document should be circulated to the chair of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee prior to consultation
 - Add reference within the draft SCI that developers' websites (for example, websites set up for pre-application consultation) are expected to be fully accessible to people with disabilities.
 - That appropriate reference should be made to the General Data Protection Regulations and compliance with them.

2. Details

- 2.1 In 2006 Merton Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). However, since its adoption there have been a number of changes to planning legislation, planning guidance and technological advances such as social media, which have changed the way public consultations and engagement takes place and are carried out. All this means Merton's SCI (2006) requires updating to have regard to these changes.
- 2.2 In accordance with planning legislation, the draft SCI outlines:
- How and when the Council will involve local communities, businesses, voluntary sector and other interested parties in the production of development planning documents for example Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and on submitted planning applications;
 - The planning process;
 - The constraints imposed by regulations and planning policies (national and regional);
 - How the Council will provide feedback to comments made during consultations;
 - The consultation methods to be used.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 Officers consider that there are no reasonable alternatives to updating Merton's Statement of Community Involvement 2006. The SCI is a legal (statutory) document that must be complied with by all planning processes including the process of agreeing planning documents and making decisions on planning applications.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1 Subject to Cabinet and Council approval and in line with planning regulations a six week public consultation is proposed on the drafted SCI in winter 2019/20.

5. Timetable

- 4.2 Subject to Cabinet approval and in line with planning regulations, a six-week public consultation is proposed on Merton's draft SCI. The findings would be reported to the Borough Plan Advisory Committee and Cabinet and the SCI updated accordingly before being recommended to councillors for adoption in early 2020.

6. Financial, resource and property implications

- 6.1 The costs of preparing SCI fall within existing council budgets..

7. Legal and statutory implications

- 7.1 This SCI has been produced under section 18 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to prepare and maintain a SCI

8. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

- 8.1 No implications.

9. Risk management and health and safety implications

- 9.1 No implications

10. Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- 10.1 Appendix A: draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

11. Background Papers – the following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report

- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 and
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

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