



Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - Consideration of representations made on the Draft SCI and Submission to Secretary of State

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and forms part of Derby's Local Development Framework. The SCI sets out how stakeholders and the public can get involved throughout the various stages of plan preparation. It also indicates how the Council will consult on planning applications.
- 1.2 In the first half of 2005 we informally consulted business, community, environmental, hard-to reach groups and adjoining authorities during the preparation of a draft version of the SCI. At the end of August 2005, the draft SCI was published for wider public consultation. The document was advertised in the Derby Evening Telegraph and copies were made available for people to comment on, including via the Council's website.
- 1.3 The responses and comments received from the six-week public consultation have been summarised into a schedule entitled, "Summary of Representations, Director's Responses and Recommendation for Change" (Appendix 2). The schedule also sets out the recommendations for changes to the Statement of Community Involvement in light of the comments received. This schedule and a version of the proposed submission document containing the recommended changes (Appendix 3) can be seen on CMIS. If Members are happy to agree these amendments, the next step is to submit the finalised document to the Secretary of State.
- 1.4 The main change being recommended is the production of a non-technical summary that will provide a simple guide to the planning process in Derby. We will use the Council's new "Plain Talking Group" to help with this. The majority of the other comments received are concerned with minor changes to improve the content and clarity of the document and to improve the Council's methods of consultation.
- 1.5 Planning and Environment Commission are due to consider these matters on 10 February 2006 and any comments will be reported separately.
- 1.6 The intention is to submit the SCI to the Secretary of State in April. Following submission, there will be a six-week period during which formal representations can be made on the SCI. Any representations received will be considered by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State as part of the Examination into the Plan and before the final version is adopted.
- 1.7 Subject to any issues raised at the meeting, I support the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To consider the representations received to the public consultation on the draft SCI and to approve the recommended changes in response (Appendix 2).
- 2.2 To approve the amended Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 3).
- 2.3 To authorise the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Community, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, to approve any further minor changes to the amended SCI prior to submission to the Secretary of State.
- 2.4 To authorise the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Community to make the necessary arrangements to submit the amended SCI to the Secretary of State and to place this and any necessary supporting documents on Deposit.
- 2.5 To refer this report and appendices, to the 1 March Full Council meeting.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To progress the Statement of Community of Involvement for submission in April 2006 as programmed in the Local Development Scheme.



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council's policy for public consultation and participation in the town and country planning process. Preparation is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as part of Derby's Local Development Framework. The SCI sets out how stakeholders and the public can get involved throughout the various stages of plan preparation. It also indicates how the Council will consult on planning applications.
- 1.2 In the first half of 2005 we informally consulted a range of bodies, including business, community, environmental and conservation groups, hard-to-reach groups and adjoining authorities, including adjoining parish councils. Their views and ideas were taken on board in preparing a draft version of the Statement of Community Involvement. An emerging version of the draft was discussed by Planning and Environment Commission on 27 June 2005, which provided some useful suggestions for improving community involvement.
- 1.3 At the end of August 2005, the draft Statement of Community Involvement was formally published for a public consultation. The document was advertised in the Derby Evening Telegraph and made available for people to look at and comment on in the Roman House and Council House receptions and in all the City's libraries. A copy of the draft was also put on the Council's website. During the six-week public consultation, a presentation on the Statement of Community Involvement was given to a specially arranged focus group made up of members from the Council's Advisory Committees.
- 1.4 The responses and comments received from the six-week public consultation have been summarised into a schedule entitled, "Summary of Representations, Director's Responses and Recommendation for Change" (Appendix 2). The schedule also sets out the recommendations for changes to the Statement of Community Involvement in light of the comments received. Some minor changes to the document have also been made in response to comments from internal officers and to requests to add names to the SCI mailing list. This schedule and a version of the submission document containing the recommended changes (Appendix 3) can be seen via CMIS. If Members are happy to agree these amendments, the next step is to submit the finalised document to the Secretary of State.
- 1.5 The responses and comments were mainly concerned with detailed points regarding potential improvements to the Statement of Community Involvement and its proposals.

In summary the main issues raised were:

- the technical terms used in the document are not always clear
- it is not sufficiently clear how different opinions are addressed, how comments are actually considered and how final decisions are reached
- the SCI should clearly show the level of commitment to customer service, on issues such as acknowledging consultation responses and on interpretation services
- the SCI needs to clarify what is meant by “hard to reach” groups and how the Council intends to consult them.

We propose to address these issues in the following ways:

- produce a separate non-technical summary of the SCI and insert a glossary in the main document
- make it more clear how planning decisions are reached and who makes them
- show how people’s comments and objections will be considered and what feedback they will receive, referring closely to the Council’s Customer Service Standards
- explain what is meant by “hard-to-reach” groups and what particular methods will be used to involve them

- 1.6 Following submission to the Secretary of State, there will be a six-week period during which formal representations can be made on the SCI. Any representations received will be considered by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. It is possible that this could happen via a formal Public Inquiry, but advice from the Planning Inspectorate indicates that the Written Representations procedure is more likely to apply. The Inspector will provide the Council with a Report containing any recommendations for changes, which are binding. The Council can then adopt the document.
- 1.7 The intention is to submit the SCI in April to coincide with the SCI being submitted by the County Council. This is because waste and minerals planning functions are performed jointly. Coordinating the submission will allow the same Inspector to consider both documents, thereby saving time and resources.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The submission to the Secretary of State of the Statement of Community Involvement is required by Regulation. No other options have therefore been considered.

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Background papers: Draft Statement of Community Involvement August 2005

List of appendices: Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 -Summary of Representations, Director’s Responses and Recommendation for Change on

<http://cmis.derby.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/MeetingDocuments.aspx?Meeting=838>)

Appendix 3 – Proposed Submission SCI containing recommended changes on

<http://cmis.derby.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/MeetingDocuments.aspx?Meeting=838>)

IMPLICATIONS**Financial**

1. There will be some printing and advertisement costs associated with submitting the SCI which can be accommodated within existing budgets. There will probably be further costs arising from the Examination Stage of the SCI expected to take place in the financial year 2006/07, but these cannot be forecast with any accuracy until the number and nature of representations on the submitted SCI is known. An estimate of these costs has nevertheless been included in the budget planning process. It is hoped to limit costs by the use of written representation procedures rather than a formal Inquiry.

Legal

- 2.1 The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the relevant regulations.

Personnel

- 3.1 Preparation of the Submission Statement of Community Involvement is an objective included in the Plans and Policies Business Plan 2005/6 and therefore has no additional staffing implications.

Equalities impact

- 4.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is directly concerned with improving community involvement in the planning process. Through its preparation we are seeking to ensure that we improve consultation with groups from a wide range of representatives of Derby's community including: voluntary bodies, businesses, different racial, ethnic or national groups, women's groups, religious groups, and bodies which represent the interests of disabled people.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 The proposal predominantly comes under the Council's Objective of strong and positive neighbourhoods and, a healthy environment.