

Report of the Director of City Strategy

City of York Local Development Framework – Statement of Community Involvement

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the ongoing work on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and to ask the Executive to recommend to Full Council, as the appropriate decision making body, that they approve the Statement of Community Involvement (Copies of the Submission Draft are available in the Members' Library and to view on the Council's website, at www.york.gov.uk). The proposal, subject to Member approval, is for the Statement of Community Involvement to be submitted to the Secretary of State for formal examination in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Background

2. A key aim of the new planning system is to strengthen community and stakeholder involvement in the development of local communities. Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which should set out how the Council intends to involve the community in preparing Local Development Documents and making decisions on planning applications.
3. The SCI is the first document to be produced as part of the City of York Local Development Framework. It provides the opportunity to formally outline existing consultation practices as part of the planning system and to set out the Council's overall vision for community involvement. It also provides the opportunity to identify how community involvement in the planning process could be developed in the future.
4. Each Development Plan Document (DPD) produced is required to go through 3 main stages of production:

- **‘Issues & Options’ Stage** – at this point the Council highlights key issues and options for consultation to inform the content, scope and direction of the DPD.
 - **‘Preferred Options’ Stage** – consultation on the Council’s intended approach.
 - **Submission Stage** - consultation on the final document submitted by the Council to the Secretary of State for examination. Any comments received at this stage will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration.
5. In October last year Members considered the draft SCI (‘Preferred Options’) and approved it for public consultation. This report provides a write up of the results of that consultation and identifies suggested amendments to the draft SCI. Subject to Member approval the SCI will be submitted to the Secretary of State for formal Examination. Once the SCI is submitted we are required to undertake a further 6 weeks of consultation. Any comments received at this stage will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration. The Inspectorate will decide on the basis of comments received during the consultation, whether there is a need to hold an examination or whether comments can be dealt with through written representations.
 6. The Submission Draft SCI was considered by the LDF Working Group on 7 November 2006. The recommendations of the group are attached as Annex B to this report.

Consultation

7. Consultation on the draft SCI took place between 22 February 2006 and 10 April 2006. Details of the consultation, highlighting the opportunity to comment were sent out to over 400 contacts on the Local Development Framework database. These contacts included statutory (specific) bodies, local organisations and interest groups and individuals. Specific bodies were sent copies of the draft SCI, whilst all other contacts were sent a summary leaflet with details of where they could view the full document.
8. Copies of the draft SCI, summary leaflet, poster and comment form were placed in the receptions at the Guildhall and 9 St Leonard’s Place and in all local libraries. The documents were also available on the Council’s website, with an electronic comment form which could be submitted online.
9. In order to more widely advertise the opportunity to comment on the draft SCI, a formal notice was placed in the Evening Press, and copies of the leaflet and poster were distributed to local colleges, schools, GP surgeries, major employers, community centres and places of worship, with a request that they be placed where they could be viewed by students, employees and members of the public.
10. In addition to the above, Officers attended meetings of the Environment Forum, the Inclusive York Forum and the Open Planning Forum to present an item on the SCI.

Level of response

11. In total, 238 comments were received. These included responses from specific consultees such as Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, the Regional Assembly, a number of Parish Councils, English Nature and the Highways Agency, as well as from other general bodies such as Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), community and residents associations and individuals.

Key issues raised in responses

12. The table attached at Annex A sets out a summary of the issues which were raised by respondents, outlines an officer response and where relevant, sets out recommendations for how the issues are addressed in the submission draft SCI which is available in the Member's Library or on-line at
13. In summary the main changes made in the redrafted SCI are as follows:
 - the SCI has been divided into four parts to make it clearer which sections relate to the Local Development Framework and which relate to planning applications;
 - section 4 on Guiding Principles has been expanded to provide more information on how the principles will shape public involvement in planning matters;
 - the sections on 'who will be involved', 'community profile' and 'hard-to-reach groups' have been merged to give a clearer overall picture about who will be involved and to rely more on the detail set out in the annex to avoid duplication (section 5 and Annex 1);
 - section 7 on the LDF has been amended to draw out more clearly the different types of LDF document and our key commitments for seeking to achieve effective community involvement in the preparation of the LDF; and
 - the size of development for which we will seek more in depth community involvement in planning applications has been amended to reflect the statutory definition of 'major' applications (section 8).

Next steps

14. It is anticipated that consultation on the submission draft SCI will be carried out towards the end of 2006 for a period of six weeks. The Council are required to commence consultation immediately after the SCI is submitted to the Secretary of State. The Council is required to make copies of the SCI available for inspection at the Council offices and local libraries, publish the document on the Council's website, send copies to the statutory bodies and publish a formal notice in a local newspaper. In addition the Council will also inform all those who have previously responded that the SCI has been submitted and that there is a further opportunity for comment.
15. As part of the submission we are required to submit a statement of consultation. The statement will be a factual description of consultation undertaken to date and will include summaries of the issues raised by respondents at each stage and how these have been addressed in subsequent

drafts. The main body of this statement will consist of the summaries of comments which have previously been reported to Members for the Issues and Options stage in December 2005, and for the Preferred Options as part of this report.

Options

16. That the SCI is approved for submission to the Secretary of State for examination.

Analysis

17. It is imperative that the SCI is progressed through to adoption to provide a sound basis for carrying out consultation on the Local Development Framework as a whole.

Corporate Priorities

18. The option outlined above accords with the following Corporate Strategic Priorities:
 - Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services.
 - Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York.

Implications

19. The following implications have been assessed:
 - **Financial** The costs of undertaking the Statement of Community Involvement can be funded from budgets set aside for the Local Development Framework.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** None
 - **Equalities** None
 - **Legal** None
 - **Crime and Disorder** None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** None
 - **Property** None
 - **Other** None

Risk Management

20. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

21. That Members recommend to Full Council:
- i) that subject to changes recommended at the LDF Working Group and at this meeting, the Statement of Community Involvement is approved for submission to the Secretary of State and for formal consultation;

Reason: So that the Statement of Community Involvement can progress through to examination.

- ii) that the making of any incidental changes to the document that are necessary as a result of the recommendation of this report are delegated to the Director of City Strategy and the Executive Member and Opposition Spokesperson for City Strategy; and

Reason: So that changes recommended as a result of discussions at this meeting can be made and the report can progress through to Full Council.

- iii) that the production of the statement of consultation as detailed in paragraph 15 of this report, and the final formatting of the submission SCI document are undertaken in consultation with the Director of City Strategy and the Executive Member and Opposition Spokesperson for City Strategy.

Reason: So that the relevant documents needed for submission to the Secretary of State can be produced.

Contact Details

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A: Officers' response to issues raised during the consultation and recommended changes to the Statement of Community Involvement.

Annex B: Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement – recommendations of the LDF Working Group.