

Forward Plan reference number: Not applicable

Report title: Minor amendment to the Statement of Community Involvement document.	
Report to: Cllr Tony Ball - Cabinet Member for Economic Development	
Report author: Richard Greaves – Chief Planning Officer (County Planning and Major Development)	
Date: 3 June 2020	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To approve a minor update to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), part of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. An additional paragraph is required as a result of changes to government advice.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Approve the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 The [Statement of Community Involvement](#) (SCI) is a statutory document (under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), which sets out this authority's commitments to the level of community involvement in the County Council's preparation of Local Plan Documents and planning applications.
- 3.2 Since the Covid-19 pandemic, updates to government guidance in relation to planning procedures have made it necessary to update the document to ensure it complies with planning law for future consultations on policy plans and planning applications.
- 3.3 The table below details what update is required as well as the reason for this:

Section to be added to	Text proposed	Reason for proposed update
Introduction Page 2 To be paragraph 6	No policy in this statement shall apply if and to the extent that, as the result of an epidemic/pandemic, advice from the government or the Director of Public Health is issued which makes it impossible or inadvisable to comply with any policy in this statement.	Government guidance in relation to the Covid-19 epidemic. Due to lock-down and social distancing measures paper copies of planning applications and policy plans are not available to view at the locations specified within the SCI.

- 3.4 The Council is required to have a Statement of Community Involvement by law and it forms part of the Minerals and Waste Development framework.
- 3.5 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.6 Under the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Planning Authorities are required to identify and engage at an early stage with all those that may be interested in the development or content of the Local Plan, including those groups who may be affected by its proposals but who do not play an active part in most consultations.
- 3.7 The Statement of Community Involvement has been produced in accordance with ECC's Communications Strategy.
- 3.8 The SCI sets out the means by which the public of Essex will be engaged, particularly in respect of how waste and mineral infrastructure, schools, highways and other County matters that affect the environment and local communities.

4. Options

- 4.1 To amend and approve the Statement of Community Involvement document in line with updated government guidance.
- 4.2 Do not amend the document in which case the statement will not be aligned with the law.

5. Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 The minor text addition to the SCI will not result in any financial implications.

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 The Council is required to adopt a Statement of Community Involvement under section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SCI is a Local Development Document when adopted but it is not required to be approved by the Secretary of State.

6 Equality and Diversity implications

6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. No further actions have been listed as part of this EqIA.

7. List of appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment

8. List of Background papers

None

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date 25/6/20
Councillor Tony Ball Cabinet Member for Economic Development	

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Approved by Graham Thomas Head of Planning and Development on behalf of Steve Evison – Director of Sustainable Growth	25/6/20
Approved by Karen Williams on behalf of Nicole Wood Executive Director Finance and Technology (S151 Officer)	11/6/20
Stephanie Fields Supervising Associate – Corporate and Commercial on behalf Paul Turner Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	22/6/20