

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO**

**Cabinet**  
**09 September 2020**

**Report Title:** Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement

**Submitted by:** Head of Planning and Development

**Portfolios:** Planning and Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

**Purpose of the Report**

The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the opportunities for involving the wider community and the ways in which information is made available. The aim is to ensure that all sections of the community, including those who do not normally get involved in the planning process, have the opportunity to contribute. The joint SCI was adopted in 2015 and in accordance with regulations now needs to be reviewed.

The purpose of this report is to note the review of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement and to propose that a reviewed SCI, be adopted.

**Recommendation**

That

1. The review and recommended changes to the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement be noted.
2. The amended Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Statement of Community Involvement be approved and adopted as detailed at Appendix A.

**Reasons**

To ensure that the Council has an up to date Statement of Community Involvement to engage the community and stakeholders in planning matters.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Local Planning Authority to prepare a statement of community involvement, setting out their policy for involving persons with an interest in the development of the area when preparing and revising their local plan. The SCI has to be reviewed at least once every five years in accordance with the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.
- 1.2 Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme adopted a joint SCI in 2015. Accordingly, a review of the adopted SCI has been undertaken to comply with the regulations.
- 1.3 The SCI is aimed at a wide range of stakeholders, individuals and groups with the intention of informing people how and when they will be consulted by the planning department. The

planning process also impacts on the wider community, and not just residents. The wider community includes businesses, land owners and the development industry, as well as statutory agencies and local interest groups.

- 1.4 Community involvement is encouraged for both Planning Policy and Planning Applications (Development Management) and consultation is a statutory requirement at key stages. Whilst the SCI is a statutory requirement, both councils recognise that engagement is an essential part of the planning process and, at the national level, growing emphasis is placed on community engagement.

## 2. **Issues**

2.1 A review of the SCI has been undertaken taking into account the following:

- a. ensuring consistency with legislation;
- b. comparison with the latest best practice elsewhere;
- c. ensuring that all information is current including hyperlinks within the document and
- d. reflected on the current circumstances regarding Covid-19 which restrict some methods used to communicate with public, especially in physically accessing documents and face to face engagement.

2.2 Following the review, minor changes have been proposed for the SCI and are reflected in the Draft Joint Statement of Community Involvement attached as Appendix A to this report. These changes are detailed below:

### **Part 1 – Introduction and Background**

In this section the review has focused on updating dates, and a couple of sentences have been added regarding website accessibility of the documents.

### **Part 2 – Planning Policy**

Within this section clarity is given on undertaking exhibitions where circumstances prevent physical interaction (this is a direct response to Covid-19 and accords with Government emergency legislation).

### **Part 3 – Neighbourhood Planning**

This section has been expanded to provide more detailed information of how we support communities in neighbourhood planning.

### **Part 4 – Development Management**

Updates have been made to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) references and incorporated the 2016 'Local Code of Conduct for Dealing with Planning Matters'.

### **Appendix 1**

Updated the list of consultation bodies and also included a general list which will catch all new consultation bodies for the next five years.

### **Appendix 8**

Updated the glossary.

2.3 The original SCI was consulted upon to ensure that the appropriate strategy for consultation was set out. Given that only minor changes are proposed, adding further clarity and not proposing major changes to the consultation methods used, and the SCI remains fit for purpose it is not proposed to formally consult on these changes.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 To approve and adopt the amended Statement of Community Involvement.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 It is important to maintain an up to date Statement of Community Involvement to support engagement in planning services.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Not to prepare a SCI. This option is not considered feasible as it is a statutory duty to prepare and review the SCI.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 Regulations came into force on 6 April 2018 [The Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017] which require local planning authorities to review their local plans and SCIs every 5 years. Planning practice guidance on plan reviews states that: "it is important that Statements of Community Involvement are kept up-to-date to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. Therefore, a local planning authority should regularly review and update their Statement of Community Involvement to reflect any changes to engagement.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 N/A

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 No direct costs. Engagement obligations in the SCI are routine business for planning services.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Should an up to date SCI not be in place there is potential for challenge by any stakeholder in connection with any planning matter.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 N/A

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Maintaining an up to date SCI is important to secure engagement in the planning system and to avoid potential challenge.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Cabinet – 15 October 2014

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Draft SCI

14. **Background Papers**

## 14.1 2015 SCI – Final Report