

Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement in respect of Neighbourhood Plans

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Purpose of the Report

1. To approve the proposed revisions to the December 2015 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in order to comply with the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

Forward Plan

- 2 This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of September 2018.

Public Interest

- 3 A Neighbourhood Plan represents the views of Parish Councils and other stakeholders on the preferred approach to future development in a settlement. It is the subject of Independent Examination by a qualified person; it then proceeds to a Referendum by the local electorate, which if more than 50% are in favour of a Plan, it is made' (or adopted). Once the making of the Plan is confirmed by the District Council, it becomes part of the Statutory Development Plan with equal status to the Local Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications.

Recommendation

4. That the District Executive agrees to the proposed revisions to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Background

5. Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. The plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.
6. The District Council has a number of statutory roles in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan, but officers have also provided more informal assistance and guidance in the process. From 31st July 2018, the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 requires a local planning authority to set out in its Statement of Community Involvement the authority's policies for giving advice or assistance in the process of making a neighbourhood plan.
7. The following revised text is proposed to be inserted in the current Statement of Community Involvement approved in December 2015 https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/806406/statement_of_community_involvement_final_adapted_dec_2015_.pdf; this reflects what officers have been doing in any event.

“Informal Assistance

2.36 In addition to its Statutory role in the preparation of neighbourhood plans, subject to officer availability, the District Council will also provide the following assistance on a more informal basis; please note that this will often consist of providing links to existing evidence base documents, data sources or published guidance:

- Assistance with the initial scoping of the plan, including an initial meeting with the Steering Group. This will include:
 - Providing advice on planning policy issues and the Local Plan.
 - Providing advice on legal requirements and evidence gathering; and links to information held by the District Council.
 - Suggesting useful links to other sources of information.
 - Providing a map of the neighbourhood plan area.
- Liaising with the Steering Group on what modifications may be necessary following the issue of the Examiner's Report; and making changes to the plan where we are able and subject to the complexity of formatting and the time involved.
- The District Council will maintain an up to date neighbourhood planning page on its website, with links to all documentation associated with the preparation of neighbourhood plans and indicating the stages at which plans have reached. See [South Somerset District Council - Neighbourhood Plans](#)

2.37 For clarification, no financial assistance or printing of, for example, hard copies of the plan or exhibition material can be given; and any community survey work, technical assessments, or consultation material must be carried out at the Qualifying Body's own expense.

2.38 The government funded organisation 'Locality' will continue to deliver the Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme over the next four years, from 2018-2022. The programme builds on the 2015-18 programme and any support previously received will be taken in to account. The programme will provide anyone working on a neighbourhood plan with support from the Locality team, AECOM and other partners/specialists through:

- a basic grant of up to £9,000;
- additional grants for eligible groups with an extra £8,000.

See the website here: [Home - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#) for more information. A link to the revised Statement of Community Involvement will also be placed in the Neighbourhood Planning web pages.

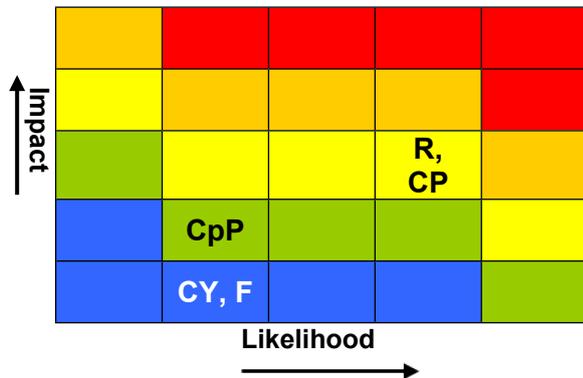
2.39 It must be recognised, and any Community embarking on plan production should be aware, that neighbourhood plans are essentially 'owned by' them, and responsibility for their production rests with the Community preparing the plan."

Financial Implications

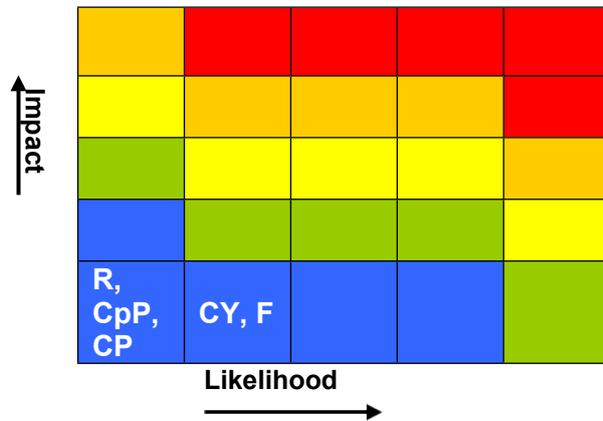
8. Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are generally passed directly to those parish and town councils (in England) where development has taken place. In England, communities that draw up a neighbourhood plan and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area.
9. The Council is able to claim a grant of up to £20,000 from the Department for Housing Communities and Local Government towards the costs of progressing the Neighbourhood Plan once the date of a neighbourhood plan Referendum has been set.
10. There is no SSDC funding involved in the recommendation specifically referred to in this report.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

- 11 The District Council's values include supporting people and communities, enabling them to help themselves. The Council Plan states that it will focus on supporting communities to develop local, parish and neighbourhood plans.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

- 12 The SCI does not directly address carbon emissions or climate change and no such issues arise.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13 No significant changes to a Service, Policy or Strategy are proposed directly and it is therefore not necessary that an Equality Assessment is undertaken.

Privacy Impact Assessment

- 14 No personal data handling is involved.

Background Papers

SSDC Statement of Community Involvement.