

Addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement in respect of Consulting on Neighbourhood Plans

Executive Portfolio Holder: *Val Keitch, Strategy and Housing*
Strategic Director: *Kirsty Larkins, Director, Strategy and Commissioning*
Service Manager: *Peter Paddon, Lead Specialist – Strategic Planning*
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Purpose of the Report

- 1 To approve an Addendum to the 2018 Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in order to comply with recently issued Government Guidance on consulting on Neighbourhood Plans during the current restrictions on movements as a result of Covid-19. The current SCI can be found here:
<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1934/statement-of-community-involvement-final-september-2018.pdf>

Forward Plan

- 2 This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of July 2020.

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.
- 4 [Regulations linked to the Coronavirus Act 2020](#) mean that no elections or referendums can take place until 6 May 2021. In the meantime, Planning Practice Guidance¹ states that neighbourhood plans awaiting referendums can be given "significant weight" in decision-making.

Recommendations

- 5 That the District Executive:
 - a. agrees to the proposed Addendum to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

¹ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): planning update - GOV.UK](#)



South Somerset District Council

- b. delegates responsibility to the Lead Specialist - Strategic Planning in consultation with the Director of Strategy and Commissioning and the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Housing to make further technical amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement to meet any requirements arising from changes in Government Legislation or Guidance.

Background

- 6 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. The current SCI includes the measures the Council will take in consulting on a Submission Neighbourhood Plan (paragraph 2.31 of the SCI). These include:
 - Publication on SSDC's website www.southsomerset.gov.uk;
 - Request that the town/parish council display the notice with details of how to comment on the parish notice board/parish website / magazine and at local venues they consider will raise awareness of the proposal locally;
 - SSDC to send email / letter to adjoining parishes and ward members;
 - SSDC to send email / letter to relevant parish and ward member/s;
 - Advertise in the local press; and
 - Any 'consultation body' that is referred to in the consultation statement submitted by the town and parish council in accordance with Regulation 15 will be notified via email / letter that the plan proposal has been received.

The new temporary Addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement

- 7 The Government has recently issued Planning Practice Guidance related to the Covid-19 pandemic, which encourages local authorities to review their SCI in response to restrictions on movements which may make it more difficult for some people to access hard copies of Submission Neighbourhood Plan documents. As a result, the following paragraphs are proposed to be appended to the current SCI approved in September 2018:

2.31a - Since the introduction of restrictions on movements as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the inspection of hard copies of Submission Documents has not been possible. The Government's revised Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that, even during the current restrictions, authorities should make any temporary amendments that are necessary to allow plan-making to progress; and that they continue to promote effective community engagement by means which are reasonably practicable.

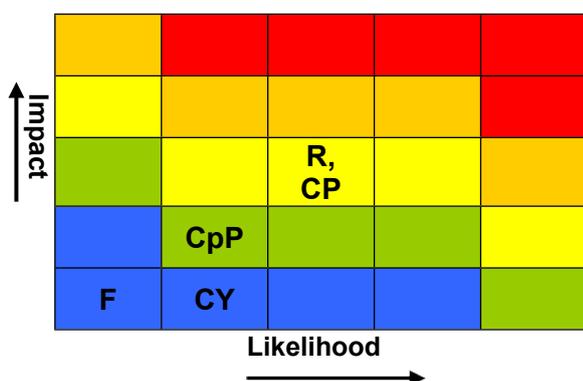
2.31b - In response, SSDC will continue to carry out the steps in paragraph 2.31 but will liaise with the Parish or Town Council to agree how best hard copies of the documents can be made available where normal options such as a library or local shop are not available due to the Covid-19 pandemic. SSDC will also encourage Parish and Town Councils to use their local knowledge to disseminate information about the Submission Documentation and consultation (especially if they know someone who may not have access to the Internet) through informal networks or interest groups and social media, or using the telephone where this is feasible. Individuals will also be allowed to nominate an advocate to share views on their behalf.

- 8 The full Addendum is attached as an appendix to this report.

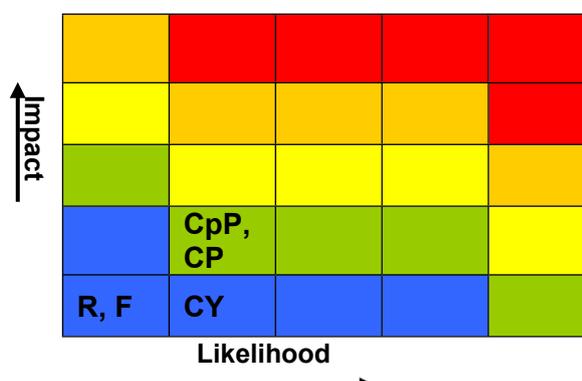
- 9 Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are generally passed directly to those parish and town councils (in England) where development has taken place. In England, communities that draw up a neighbourhood plan and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area.
- 10 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.
- 11 There is no SSDC funding involved in the recommendations 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

- 12 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

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



South Somerset District Council Equality and Diversity Implications

14 No significant changes to a Service, Policy or Strategy are proposed, directly and, therefore, it is not necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

Privacy Impact Assessment

15 It is not necessary to process personal data so, therefore, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not needed.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – SCI Addendum July 2020