

Briefing to Somerset Planning Committees - Somerset Statement of Community Involvement Consultation

February 2023

1. Introduction

Between 1st February and 16th March 2023 the Somerset Councils will be consulting on a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the new Somerset Council. Following public consultation, the intention is to then finalise the document to be formally adopted as soon as possible following vesting day. The draft SCI is appended to this document.

2. What is the Statement of Community Involvement

The SCI sets out how the Local Planning Authority will engage and consult with the community and stakeholders on planning matters. This includes consultation on planning policy (e.g. Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans) and the Development Management process (e.g. determination of planning applications). The SCI therefore includes who we will consult through the various stages of Local Plan preparation, and what consultation methods we will use. In relation to Development Management, it includes details of consultees and neighbours who will be notified of planning applications and expectations for developers and agents in terms of pre-application engagement.

Many members of committee will already be aware of existing separate SCIs that are already in place within their separate Councils. These have been prepared at different times and reflect the specific planning functions of the different Councils under the two-tier system. With the formation of the new Somerset Unitary there is therefore a need to prepare a new single SCI for Somerset as a whole. This will ensure a consistent approach to how we engage with our communities on planning matters after vesting day.

3. How to feedback

As part of the consultation we are keen to hear the views of members of existing planning committees, so these can be taken into account in taking the document forward. Please therefore provide any feedback you have through discussion at committee. Alternatively members can email any comments to their respective planning policy contacts, or comment directly via the online consultation portal.