Appendix B

Draft Statement of Community Involvement August 2015 - **Summary of Main Issues Raised During Consultation**

Any proposed new text is shown in **bold and underlined** any deleted text is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~**.**

27 respondents made comments.

Issue No.	Issues / Response Summary	Officer Response
Question 1: Do you think the Council's approach to involving the community and other groups in producing the local plan (see Table 1) is sufficient?		
	Yes 55% (6) No 36% (4) Don't Know 9% (1)	Noted. See responses under questions 3 and 5.
Question 2: If you answered no to Question 1, what suggestions do you have for how the Council can improve the way it consults on the local plan?		
1	Consultation means nothing if the Local Plan is not supported. Developers have too much power over the process and last minute changes have rendered the Local Plan largely useless.	The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the community will be consulted during the process of plan making and decision taking. Every planning application must be determined on its own merits. Planning officers are required by law to make recommendations in accordance with the policies in the development plan (Local Plan or 'made', neighbourhood plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. **Recommendation:** No Change to the SCI.
2	Paragraph 2.6 - Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is not defined, to some it means a purely environmental appraisal.	Paragraph 2.6 of the SCI states that the purpose of the SA is to check "…social, environmental and economic effects". Social factors would include provision of services and facilities, economic factors include jobs. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
3	Paragraph 2.12 refers to Annual Monitoring	Paragraph 2.12 describes what the AMR does but it does not explain what authority it

	Reports (AMRs) but this term is not described or defined. Does not explain what authority it has.	has. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 2.12 The **Authority's Monitoring Report (**AMR**) is an evidence base document that helps the Council assess if local plan policies are being delivered or not. They** will look at the Council's performance against the monitoring targets set out in the Local Plan.
4	Suggest setting up a planning forum in each town/parish to enable members of the public to discuss and exchange ideas about planning and development.	Parish and Town Council meetings provide an existing forum for this type of discussion. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
5	The Council needs to start working with Huish Episcopi Parish Council.	Noted. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
Question 3: Do you think the Council's approach to consulting with the public on planning applications (as set out in Section 3) is sufficient?		
	Yes 27% (3) No 64% (7) Don't Know 9% (1)	Noted. See responses under questions 4 and 5.
Question 4: If you answered no to Question 3, what suggestions do you have for how the Council can improve the way it consults on planning applications?		
6	Developers should be required to hold a public consultation event for all applications of four or more dwellings and all multiple applications in Conservation Areas. Will assist Parish Councils who feel uncomfortable engaging with developers on pre-app.	Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework states: *Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting*

		their applications. Pre-application consultation is only required by law for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. These are usually large scale developments relating to energy, transport, water, or waste which require a type of consent known as “development consent”. Therefore officers can only encourage applicants to undertake pre-application consultation with themselves and/or the community. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
7	Paragraph 3.21 – Scheme of Delegation only mentions the Development Manager and the Area Committee Meetings it should also refer to the role of Parish Councils.	The Council is the final decision maker as the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The Scheme of Delegation deals with processes internal to the Council, making workable arrangements for the determination of applications by the LPA. However, the LPA is required, in the overall process, to consult with and consider the views of the Parish Council in each instance. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI
8	Once a planning application has been made the pre-application advice should be made publicly available.	Local Planning Authorities and developers are encouraged to engage in pre-application discussions, although this is not a requirement. The knowledge that the discussions are confidential is a key element in establishing a working relationship between developers and the Council’s staff, which would be undermined should there be a requirement to disclose details of these discussions at any stage. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI
9	Parish council comments should be given more weight. Would like a good reason why comments have been disregarded.	The decision making process is plan-led (see response to issue 1). The appropriate weight allocated to parish council comments will relate to individual circumstances in each case, determined on its merits. The LPA does, as a matter of policy, notify parish councils where decisions are taken contrary to their views, and offers an explanation of the reasons for this. **Recommendation:**

		No change to the SCI
Question 5: Do you have any other comments on the Statement of Community Involvement?		
10	Bulleted points in paragraphs 2.8 and 3.19 do not all fit grammatically with the introductory phrase.	Noted. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraphs 2.8 as follows: **Regulation 18 (Preparation of a local plan)** requires consultation with: • Various "specific consultation bodies" (essentially statutory national and local organisations that are affected by the subject matter of the local plan (see Appendix 1). • Any of the "general consultation bodies" (essentially anybody interested in the social, economic or environmental development of the district) considered appropriate (see Appendix 1). • **Residents or other bodies who carry out business in the district;** **and;** • The Council must make all relevant documents available, including a 'statement of the representations procedure'. Documents must be made available for inspection at the Council's principal office and elsewhere as appropriate (e.g. local area offices and public libraries) and on the Council's website. ~~• Residents of or other bodies who carry out business in the district.~~ • The Council must take into account any representations received. Amend paragraph 3.19 as follows: Comments on any application can be forwarded to the Council via the website, email and letter~~, and includes~~: • Anyone who has an interest in an application can make representations even though they may not have received a notification letter.
11	It is a good idea to gain the opinions of neighbours and statutory consultees.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
12	Page 30: ORR is now known as The Office of Rail	Noted.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>& Road</td><td>Recommendation:
Amend Appendix 1 as follows:
h) <s>The Office of Rail Regulation</s> <u>The Office of Rail & Road</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>13</td><td>Concern that West Stour (Stours Parish Council) is not listed in Appendix 1 as an adjoining authority. Concerned that they will not continue to be notified of planning applications at Henstridge Airfield.</td><td>Stours Parish Council does not adjoin the boundary of South Somerset therefore should not be listed in Appendix 1. The draft SCI does not alter the current consultation practices in relation to consultation with regards to planning applications for development on Henstridge Airfield.
Recommendation:
No change to the SCI.</td></tr>
<tr><td>14</td><td>The explicit link in the document between consultation and equalities is welcomed. Would like to see explicit reference to health and well-being aspects included in consultation material related to planning. Health Impact Assessments should be considered for major developments. The document demonstrates a clear commitment to community involvement and should be commended.</td><td>Noted.
Recommendation:
No change to the SCI.</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>The document too long and is not easily read by members of the public unless they are technically well informed and favours applicants and their consultants.</td><td>The Council are required to produce an SCI by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). Planning is a technical process and the legislation that accompanies Local Plan production in particular is complex and many staged. The SCI seeks to dis-till this into a document that is understandable but also technically accurate.
Recommendation:
No change to the SCI.</td></tr>
<tr><td>16</td><td>The document should include an appendix defining acronyms.</td><td>Agreed.
Recommendation:
Insert a list of acronyms used in the document as <u>Appendix 3</u>:
<table><tr><td><u>Acronym</u></td><td><u>Meaning</u></td></tr><tr><td><u>The Council</u></td><td><u>South Somerset District Council</u></td></tr></table></td></tr>
</table>

		SSDC	**South Somerset District Council**
		iNovem	**South Somerset District Council's on line software package which allows response to consultations to be made online.**
		SCI	**Statement of Community Involvement**
		NPPF	**National Planning Policy Framework (CLG, March 2012)**
		NPPG	**National Planning Practice Guidance**
		CIL	**Community Infrastructure Levy**
		DPD	**Development Plan Document**
		SPD	**Supplementary Planning Document**
		LDS	**Local Development Scheme**
		AMR	**Authority's Monitoring Report**
		SA	**Sustainability Appraisal**
		LLFA	**Lead Local Flood Authority**
		SRA	**Somerset Rivers Authority**
		EqA	**Equality Analysis**
		BME	**Black and Minority Ethic**
		LEP	**Local Enterprise Partnership**
		LNP	**Local Nature Partnership**
17	The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB should be listed in Appendix 1 and other environmental groups should be consulted.	The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB is included on the Spatial Policy consultation database and will remain so. This means that it will be consulted on all relevant Spatial Planning documents. Only the Specific Consultation Bodies as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations	

		2012 are listed in Appendix 1. The Appendix does not list all those on the database as it includes over 2,000 records and is constantly being updated. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
18	Appendix 1 - Nether Compton has been omitted from the Queen Thorne Group of villages.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Amend Appendix 1 as follows: …Queen Thorne Group (**Nether Compton**, Over Compton, Trent & Sandford Orcas Parish Councils)….
19	The section of the SCI dealing with Neighbourhood Plans should include a reference to the basic conditions.	Agree that it would be useful to include a reference to the 'basic conditions'. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 2.25 as follows: A neighbourhood plan is a community-led and prepared document for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of a parish (or group of parishes). It may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of sites for specific kinds of development. It can deal with a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues (such as housing, employment, heritage and transport) or it may focus on one or two key local issues only. **In order to progress to referendum a neighbourhood plan must be examined to ensure that it meets a number of basic conditions i.e. that it has regard to national planning policies, it is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan for the area, it contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and is compatible with European Union law and human rights obligations.** Once 'made' a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the development plan ~~i.e. it~~ **so** has statutory weight and its policies along with those in the local plan will be used to determine planning applications.
20	How would someone be able to contact the council in person -with regard to the contact the council table in the document.	Noted. **Recommendation:** Amend contact details table in paragraph 1.10 to include: Council Offices Brympton Way, Yeovil

		Write **or Visit** BA20 2HT
21	Paragraph 2.6 Sustainability appraisal - what about including Somerset Wildlife Trust and community environmental groups?	The Somerset Wildlife Trust and other local environmental groups are not a statutory consultees for Sustainability Appraisal they are included on the Spatial Policy Consultation database. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
22	Paragraph 3.10 web link should go direct to the check list.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 3.10 as follows: "…This can be seen on the Council's website ~~www.southsomerset.gov.uk~~. **http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/176496/validation%20document%202007.pdf** ...."
23	Appendix 2: Suggestion of setting up a Community Planning Panel or engaging with the Design Review Panel made up of diverse representatives of the community and or built environment experts? see http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk/ds-dre-south-west-design-review-panel http://www.designreviewpanel.co.uk/#!local-authorities/c1be9 http://creatingexcellence.net/	Appendix 2 lists: Methods of engagement for development plan documents and supplementary planning documents. A Design Review Panel is a tool for reviewing planning applications and is something that SSDC may consider using in the future. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
24	The SCI should state that as well as being able to view the weekly list on the SSDC website, it is also possible to receive this list by email.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 3.15 as follows: The Council produces a weekly list of registered **and determined planning** applications ~~and it is available to view on the Council's website~~; you can sign up to receive a copy through the Council's web site: http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/my-account/my-planning/
25	The scheme of delegation should be better	Noted.

	described as to the circumstances when applications are referred to an area committee.	**Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 3.21 as follows: For further information on the scheme of delegation, **please see here:** **http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/120189/scheme_of_delegation__aug11_.pdf or** contact the Development Management Service on 01935 462462
26	Paragraph 3.4 and 3.7 should include an obligation on the Council to consult with the local Parish Council and neighbours before they advise the applicant that the application is likely to succeed.	Paragraph 3.13 states that on receipt of a planning application "..All relevant neighbours, parish/town Council, and other relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees are notified of the application…" Pre-application advice is given on a without prejudice basis and can never predetermine if a proposal will achieve planning permission or not. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
27	Paragraph 3.7 should list more examples of issues that need to be discussed e.g. noise, smell & pollution etc.	Agreed. Although the list is not meant to be prescriptive or an agreed set of issues. The particulars of each application will vary according to circumstance. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 3.7 as follows: Householders and other applicants and/or agents are encouraged to consider matters such as loss of privacy and light**, noise, or odour,** and to discuss/show their plans to neighbours before submitting a planning application….
28	There is no mechanism for residents to discuss the implications of major applications before they are formally discussed at a parish/town council meeting.	Despite there being no formal mechanism, residents are not prevented from meeting, collaborating and discussing applications with each other. This may include traditional methods (e.g. letter writing, petitions, informal meetings etc.) and also more modern methods (e.g. using social media) to discuss issues prior to a formal parish or town council meeting. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
29	The public should be involved in planning applications at an earlier stage. On occasion pre-application discussions have been on-going for years before the developer holds a public	Pre-application discussions with applicants are conducted on a confidential basis for reasons set out above (see 8 above). Whilst developers can be encouraged to engage with the public timeously, there is no mechanism whereby the LPA can require lengthy consultation exercises.

	consultation event.	**Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
30	Parish Councils should be more pro-active in identifying major applications and bringing them to the attention of the community.	This is a matter for discussion with individual Parish Councils. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
31	Most planning application consultation responses from members of the public are ignored. They should be given more weight.	Consultation responses relating to planning issues are given due regard and reported to members in Committee reports. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
32	Huish Episcopi Parish Council comments have often been ignored during the consideration of planning application/s, a number of key local sustainability issues have been ignored. N.B. The response includes analysis of issues relating to sewerage and water supply, employment, transport, flooding, health provision, affordable housing.	These comments relate to individual planning applications in a specific settlement and are not relevant to the SCI. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
33	Major Applications – the word “encouraged” is not strong enough, engagement with local communities prior to submission of applications should be mandatory.	See response to issue no. 6 above. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
34	The document is currently lacking a foreword by the relevant Portfolio Holder.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** A foreword by the Portfolio for Strategic Planning (Place Making) has been added to the document.
35	The current document does not include paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5 of 2007 SCI - consider that they should be included in the update document.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Insert the following new paragraphs before 1.9. **<u>One of the key objectives of the SCI is to encourage continuous community involvement in the planning process and to provide opportunities for involvement and participation for those who wish to be involved in planning</u>**

		matters. It is hoped that through the methods and processes outlined in this document you will have a clear understanding of how you can be involved and be encouraged to take an active part in planning matters. The Council is keen to build on its reputation for actively engaging with the community and by setting out its approach in relation to planning. In this document it makes it clear to all the level of engagement that can be expected. **By engaging in the planning process you will be able to help shape your environment, make a positive contribution for the future and help to ensure that the Council is aware of local issues. By getting involved in the process at an early stage problems and aspirations can be highlighted and addressed.**
36	Would welcome a reference to local councils and NGOs, so that it refers to ".... residents, businesses, local councils and NGOs operating within the district". Last sentence of para. 1.6 could usefully mention 'and organisations' after 'a wide range of people'.	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 1.6 as follows: South Somerset District Council is committed to high quality engagement with its residents ~~and~~ **,**businesses**, local councils, and other organisations** operating within the district. The benefits of engaging with a wide range of people **and organisations** in the planning process within South Somerset include: • Greater public ownership of planning decisions; • Informing the Council of public priorities; • Providing opportunities for the Council and others to work collaboratively; and • Compliance with statutory regulations.
37	Paragraph 3.12: Paragraph should begin with 'Applicants submitting…"	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Amend paragraph 3.12 as follows: **Applicants submitting** more complex applications would be advised……
38	Table 2, bottom of the first column on page 19, should 'requiring' in fact be 'requires'?	Agreed. **Recommendation:** Amend first column of Table 2 as follows: …..for example applications of "local significance" that the LPA considers ~~requiring~~ **requires** wide community involvement.

39	Paragraph 3.16 "[after "appropriate" continue] in the public interest, including the display of Site Notices, e.g. for a major housing development potentially affecting a wider areas than the application site and its' immediate environs."	This is not necessary as site notices are adequately addressed in paragraphs 3.17 and 3.18 of the SCI. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
40	Paragraph. 3.20 - SSDC may have created a legal legitimate expectation that people will be further consulted, something that cannot lawfully be discarded or ignored by SSDC in the interests of "efficient decision making". Re-consultation would seem to me to be the rule to be followed by SSDC, not the exception.	Noted. The process does not create an automatic expectation of further consultation. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.
41	Consultation periods, should be extended if they coincide with holiday periods or avoid holiday periods.	Where it is possible SSDC seeks to avoid holding Local Plan consultations over holiday periods, however this cannot always be avoided due to deadlines and the need to balance a number of different projects. There have been instances where consultation periods have been extended because of holiday periods. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI
42	Respondent suggests: ii) Mobile consultations taking place in more than one location e.g. in Ilminster perhaps using the Tesco car park and another location such as the parish rooms (iii) Offering different times to enable a consultation to be accessible, particularly for people who work during the day (iv) Identify employment land (v) A maximum and minimum number of new housing would be clearer than a target number	Noted. **Recommendation:** No change to the SCI.