

# Copeland Local Plan: Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2020

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## PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the amendments made to the Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2016 to take account of the restrictions due to Covid-19, the updated Development Management processes and the fact that planning applications are now available online, and an update to the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Members support the changes to the Statement of Community Involvement, including the temporary limitations in public/face to face engagement due to the Covid-19 restrictions. This can then be presented to Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> September for adoption.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is produced by the Council's Strategic Planning Team as part of the Local Plan process. The document aims to set down how and when the Council will involve the local community in the planning process (Local Plan Development, Neighbourhood Planning, and when considering different types of planning applications and enforcement).
- 1.2 The outbreak of Covid-19, and accompanying lockdown and social distancing measures have meant that Councils need to change the way they engage with the public. From a planning perspective, Paragraph 077 of the National Planning Practice Guidance says *"Where any of the policies in the Statement of Community Involvement cannot be complied with due to current guidance to help combat the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19), the local planning authority is encouraged to undertake an immediate review and update the policies where necessary to that plan-making can continue."*
- 1.3 Paragraph 078 gives some examples of what may need to be considered, highlighting the importance of online methods, given the current restrictions and limitations on face to face meetings and interactions.

## **2.0 THE KEY CHANGES IN THE REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2020**

- 2.1 The document has been updated to reflect the temporary changes resulting from Covid-19, and they have been summarised in Table 1 on page 19 of the Revised Statement of Community Involvement. This states that public meetings, meetings with groups, public exhibitions and other face to face interactions will not be possible due to restrictions, but that the Council will try to offer virtual meetings with groups instead.
- 2.2 The document has also been updated to show how the Council will consult and consider planning applications, and other Development Management functions, and promote the fact the planning applications are now available on line. This is shown in Table 2 on page 30 of the document.
- 2.3 The final main changes have been to update the Statement of Community Involvement to take account of regulations published since 2016, and also update the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol, which outlines the support the Council will provide to any parish wishing to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.4 The document has been reviewed and updated to reflect any changes since 2016 such as changes to contact details.
- 2.5 The Revised Statement of Community Involvement is attached in Appendix 1, while the Updated Neighbourhood Planning Protocol in in Appendix 2.
- 2.6 It should be noted that the changes identified due to Covid-19 restrictions are temporary, but the Council may continue to offer virtual meetings in the longer term if they prove successful, alongside traditional face to face methods as restrictions are lifted.

## **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Statement of Community Involvement demonstrates how the Council will consult and engage with the public on planning matters. It needs to be updated in light of the current restrictions as outlined in Table 1 of the SCI.
- 3.2 Members are asked to support these temporary changes to the way the Council consults.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2020

Appendix 2: Updated Neighbourhood Planning Protocol