

TITLE:	Derwentside Local Development Framework: Draft Statement of Community Involvement
TO/ON:	Executive – 9th January 2006
BY:	Director of Environmental Services
PORTFOLIO:	Environment
STATUS:	Report

STRATEGIC FACTOR CHECKLIST

The Council's Corporate Management Team has confirmed that the Strategic Factor Checklist has been applied to the development of this report, and there are no key issues, over and above those set out in the body of the report, that need to be brought to Members' attention.

1 SUBJECT MATTER AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the preparation of the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The document sets out how the community and other stakeholders will be involved in the preparation of the LDF and in the consideration of planning applications. A full copy of the SCI is attached to this report.
- 1.2 Input into the SCI has been forthcoming from other Divisions in the Council, particularly Corporate Strategy and Policy, and Economic Development and Regeneration. Questionnaires were also sent to schools, parish councils and Community Partnerships. The results of the questionnaire have been used to inform the content of the SCI and full details of the responses are available from the Development Plans Team. Early copies of the draft were also sent to statutory consultees as required by Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. No comments have been received.

2 POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new development plan system. At District level this will comprise the LDF, which will be a folder of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that will guide the future landuse of the District. The SCI sets out the standards to be achieved by the Council in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all LDDs and planning applications. The Council must comply with the SCI when preparing LDDs. If the authority fails to do so then it could result in the relevant document being withdrawn.

3 CONTENT OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 3.1 The SCI gives details of how the community and stakeholders will be involved in developing the LDF. It gives a brief description of what documents will be included in the LDF and the stages that these documents must go through. It emphasises the opportunities that will arise for the community to comment and how they will be kept informed of the progress of the various documents. The SCI also identifies the target groups that the Council is looking to involve in the LDF and examples of actual methods that can be used.
- 3.2 The SCI sets how the community and other stakeholders can get involved in decisions on planning applications for development in the District by setting out exactly how neighbours and other members of the public will be told about new proposals and how they can make their views known to the Council.
- 3.3 The SCI also encourages developers to undertake consultation with communities at the design and planning stages of significant planning applications before they are submitted to the Council. This provides the community with information about a proposed development and provides an opportunity to the developer to inform the community of any benefits their proposal may have. In many cases it will also lead to a smoother and speedier consideration of the subsequent planning application.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 If the SCI is accepted by Executive it will be published and made available to the public and other stakeholders to comment for a six week period from 20th January 2006 until the 3rd March 2006. This will enable the Council to meet the first milestone identified in the adopted Local Development Scheme.
- 4.2 Following an assessment of any comments received, modifications will be made and reported back to Executive in July 2006. This final version will then be submitted to the Government and at the same time published for a further six weeks when there will be another opportunity for comment. The final SCI and any comments submitted during this second consultation period are then considered by an independent Government Inspector. It is expected that most issues would be dealt with by written representations but there is a possibility that an Examination in Public may be held early in 2007.
- 4.3 The Government Inspector then produces a binding report suggesting any changes that are needed. The Council will have to make the changes as directed and the SCI is then adopted.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Executive is recommended to:
- i) Approve the contents of the draft Derwentside Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation commencing on 20th January.