



District of **easington**.

Report to: District Council of Easington
Date: 6th October 2005
Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Subject LDF : Statement of Community Involvement
Ward: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Statement of Community Involvement and for its submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 The Executive and Management Team have been consulted and support the proposals recommended in this report. Public consultation on a draft SCI was undertaken for six weeks between July and September 2005, representations received and the Council's response in amending the draft report are identified in Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduces a new planning system which is intended to promote a more proactive, positive approach to managing development. Development plan documents will continue to be the essential framework for planning decisions but a process has been introduced to ensure community and stakeholder involvement is sought from the outset of plan preparation. This is to achieve local ownership and legitimacy for the policies that will shape the future of the area.
- 3.2 The Council's proposals to facilitate engagement in the planning process need to be identified in a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This document will form part of the Local Development Framework and should set out the Council's policy and standards for involving the community and stakeholders in the preparation of development plan documents and planning applications, to meet the requirements of the Act.
- 3.3 In the Local Development Scheme approved by the Council in March 2005, it was proposed that the SCI would be submitted to the Government Office (GO-NE) by the end of October 2005. It will be subject to independent examination early next year before the Council can formally adopt it. The Inspector's report will be binding on the Council.

4. Position Statement and Option Appraisal

- 4.1 A copy of the SCI proposed for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is available in the Members Library.
- 4.2 The document is intended to specify how the Council will seek to promote effective community involvement in all aspects of its development plan preparation work and in the consideration of planning applications in order to meet the statutory requirements laid down by Regulations. The SCI defines an approach to stakeholder engagement and consultation, using existing mechanisms where possible, to involve all sectors of the community, through a range of communications methods, and to explore opportunities to link to engagement with the development of the Community Strategy and its Action Plan. The document also reflects the consultation procedures laid down in the Council's Development Control Manual which is accepted good practice.
- 4.3 To meet statutory Regulations, formal consultation was undertaken on a draft document, for a 6-week period, from 22nd July to 2nd September 2005. Thirteen representations were received from a small number of individuals or organisations.
- 4.4 The issues raised, and how the document was amended in response to the representation, are identified below:

- Suggested restructuring of the document to aid clarity, proposed by the Government Office
 - presentation of information in diagrammatic format;
 - amalgamation of paragraphs dealing with associated issues;
 - incorporate more detail of LDF process and procedures, presented in diagrams and matrices;
 - make reference to annual monitoring report;
 - all Council contact points should be collated;
 - clarify advice for developers.

The document has been restructured to take account of these suggestions.

- Request to be specifically included on the list of consultees
 - Showmen's Guild
 - English Heritage, by familiar title rather than initials
 - Woodland Trust
 - Parish Councils
 - Forestry Commission, for specified applications

The Appendix has been amended to include these bodies as requested.

- Request to review the order of priority of consultees
 - Durham Constabulary
 - Sport England
 - Durham County Council

PPS12 identifies statutory consultees who *must* be consulted on *all* development plan documents, as identified in SCI Appendix 1. Which other bodies should be consulted when preparing development plan documents is at the discretion of the Council according to the nature and content of the particular documents. A matrix has been incorporated into the SCI to define the participation techniques that may be used for different types of documents at various stages of production, and the Consultee details in Appendix 1 has been amended to clarify the position.

4.5 All those making representations were advised as to how their responses have been addressed in the new draft document. A complete list of representations is shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

There are no financial implications, funding requirements will be met from existing budgets.

5.2 Legal

There are no legal implications.

5.3 Policy

The SCI sets out the Council's policy for consultation on planning matters.

5.4 Risk

As this is a technical document, there is no risk.

5.5 Communications

The Submission SCI will be advertised in the local press for a statutory 6-week period in accordance with the Regulations, to invite representations that will be considered by an independent Inspector who might hold a public inquiry if necessary. The Inspector's binding report and the amended SCI will be reported to the Council for final adoption into the LDF.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities

The report addresses corporate priorities with regard to quality of service.

6.2 Equality and Diversity

The SCI seeks to meet equality and diversity needs

6.3 E-Government

The SCI addresses e-government requirements

6.4 Procurement

There are no procurement implications

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the draft SCI is submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and publicised in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Background Papers/Documents referred to:
PPS12
Local Development Scheme

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APPENDIX 1

Representations leading to amendment of the draft SCI

ORGANISATION	COMMENT	Response from DoE
Government Office for North East	Restructure Chapter 1 to be clear and logical. Use additional diagrams eg to show content of LDF, SCI process and timeframe	Acknowledged and changed
	Effective community involvement – incorporate more text to relate to PPS1, correlate sections on same in chapter 2.	More text inserted
	Para. 1.4, more details of LDF process and saved policies	More information inserted
	Augment 1.5 with a diagram, prioritise documents	Acknowledged and changed
	Re-title diagram in 1.6 to distinguish from SCI process	Acknowledged and changed
	Differentiate between formal consultation and on-going engagement for scoping	Diagram revised
	Restructure Chapter 2 to target on role of LSP in community involvement process	Chapter restructured
	Include gypsies and travellers rather than just travellers in list in chapter 3	Amended
	Consultations Methods identified in chapter 3 – incorporate a matrix to show participation techniques for different types of documents and stages of production in order to meet Tests of Soundness	Matrix added
	Include Annual Monitoring Report in para 3.29	Amended
	Focus of chapter 4 should be on community involvement rather than development control process	Amended
	All contact details for the Council should be located together within a paragraph	Amended
	Community Involvement by Developers, the chapter requires more detail to define thresholds for types of development	Some definition included but intended not to be too prescriptive

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Representations for additions to consultee list in Appendix 1 of SCI

Showmen's Guild	Request that Guild is included on consultee list	Included in Appendix 1
English Heritage	Update consultee list to clearly identify them, also amend response times in accordance with regulations	Amended
Woodland Trust	Include on list of other consultees	Included in Appendix 1
Horden Parish Council	Include parish Councils on consultee list, also requires adequate response time	Included in Appendix 1 Response times are statutory
Seaton Parish Council	Requests monitoring of conditions	Will be considered in Core Strategy and Development Control DPD
Forestry Commission	Welcome inclusion on consultation list, also consider for application affecting ancient woodland or veteran trees, breach of felling licence, EIA regulations	Noted

Representations amending presentation of Appendix 1 of SCI

Durham Constabulary	Request higher priority in consultation list	Are not statutory consultees as defined in PPS12, list of 'other consultees' amended to clarify priorities. Noted request to be consulted at earliest opportunity on specific applications
Sport England	Acknowledges document is 'sound', suggests identify SE as example	Acknowledged and amended
Durham County Council	Query DCC role in new planning procedures	Advised have agency role in assessing conformity to RSS

Other representations

Highways Agency	No specific comments	Maintain early consultation on applications
East Durham Business Service	Welcome, useful advice for private sector, offers example of other consultee type	Acknowledged
Countryside Agency	No specific comments	Acknowledged

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