

# Item no.



District of **easington.**

**Report to:** District Council of Easington  
**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006  
**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 advise the Council of the outcome of the independent examination of the Submission Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) by the Planning Inspectorate to and to recommend the document as amended by the Planning Inspectorate is adopted as Council policy to govern consultation arrangements for the preparation of the Easington District Local Development Framework.

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 Appendix 1 is a list of the organisations/individuals who responded to the formal consultation on the Submission SCI and were considered by the Planning Inspectorate. Management Team have also been consulted on the outcome of this formal examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

## **3. Background**

3.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 community and stakeholder involvement must be sought from the outset of the preparation of Development Plan documents. The Council's proposals to facilitate engagement in the planning process are identified in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The document forms part of the Local Development Framework and sets out the Council's policy and standards for involving the community and stakeholders in the preparation of both development plan documents and planning applications, to meet the requirements of the Act.

3.2 In the Local Development Scheme approved by the Council in March 2005, the SCI is proposed for adoption by April 2006, following Independent Examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspectors report is binding on the Council.

## **4. Position Statement and Option Appraisal**

4.1 The Submission SCI was circulated widely and advertised in the press. Formal consultation ended on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Thirteen responses were received and

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forwarded to the Inspector (see Appendix 1 for details). The majority of representations supported the content of the SCI and wish to be included in further consultation exercises. The Inspector considers these representations as part of his Examination.

- 4.2 As there were no requests to speak at a public enquiry the examination was carried out under written representations. The purpose of the examination is to test whether the Statement of Community Involvement is 'sound', for which there are nine defined tests. The inspector determines whether the:
- i. local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations;
  - ii. local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the community strategy;
  - iii. statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
  - iv. statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
  - v. methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
  - vi. resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
  - vii. statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
  - viii. authority has mechanisms for reviewing the statement of community involvement; and
  - ix. statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.
- 4.3 The inspector has determined that the SCI is basically sound, subject to a number of recommendations. Recommended changes are:
- To meet test 4 and test 7, be more explicit as to how the Council will engage with the community and other bodies to explore their views on the options to be considered in development plan documents, and clarify the process the Council will follow in responding to the consultations at each stage of document preparation;
  - To meet test 5, include a prominent statement advising that the document is available in other formats and other languages;
  - To meet test 8, refer to the Annual Monitoring Report as a mechanism to evaluate the community involvement process and review the SCI;
  - To meet test 9, make reference to how the results of community involvement will inform the decision making process on planning applications.

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- Minor contextual changes negotiated with the Council as being appropriate for an adopted version of the document, and to correct omissions of Seaham Town Council and Morrison's Supermarkets on consultation lists.

## 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 SCI will be available for inspection at the Council Offices and local libraries and on the Council's website.

## 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 SCI is amended in accordance with the Inspector's report and that the SCI is adopted as Council policy.

Background Papers/Documents referred to:

PPS12

Local Development Scheme

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## APPENDIX 1

Organisation	Comment
Sport England	Supporting
Castle Eden Parish Council	Request to participate
Home Builders Federation	Welcome advice in chapter 5
Highways Agency	No further comments, other than role within the LDF preparation process is adequately dealt with by Appendix 1 (Statutory Consultation Bodies Details).
Seaham Town Council	The area covered by the North Area Forum has omitted the town of Seaham and lists all other parishes. Omission needs to be corrected.
Wm Morrison Supermarket plc	No comments to make, but request add our client to database of consultees , as they are seeking representation in the area.
Government Office for the North East	No further comments.
One NorthEast	No further comments.
Durham County Council	No further comments.
Environment Agency	Sustainability Appraisal is raised at 1.14, 1.15 and 16 and would suggest that the SEA process is also covered.
National Grid	General information on the national grid's aims and objectives.
Network Rail	No comments, would like to be kept informed of future documents/progress.
English Heritage	The four environmental agencies identified are statutory consultees for the purposes of European Directive 2001/42/EC concerning Strategic Environmental Assessments, not sustainability appraisals
	21 day period within which statutory consultees must make representations begins on the day of receipt of sufficient information. English heritage too often receives incomplete documentation with a consultation.
	Where appropriate, pre-application discussion should not only be undertaken by Council officers. Include key partners, especially where they may have a statutory role. Anxious to identify difficulties or constraints early and solutions explored.
	Refer to the procedure in respect of applications for listed building and conservation area consent, not just planning applications.