

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 5th December 2016

Report Title: Hastings Local Plan Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
Update

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Purpose of Report

Following consultation on the Council's budget and the subsequent decision (Feb 2016), to advise Cabinet of changes needed to the SCI arising from the Council's decision to change its procedures in relation to publicising applications for planning permission.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet adopts the updated SCI incorporating the changes as set out in Appendix A of this Report

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that the adopted SCI is fully up-to-date and reflects the Council's current procedures relating to the publicity for applications for planning permission.

Introduction

1. Local Planning Authorities are required through national planning policy to prepare and adopt a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of the wider suite of documents making up their Local Plan.
2. The SCI sets out the Council's approach to community involvement, and provides details of how and when people can get involved in both the plan making and development management processes. It sets out clear community engagement standards and shows links with the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is the fourth review of the Hastings SCI, which was originally adopted in 2006.

Why the Hastings SCI is being updated

3. An update to the SCI is needed to reflect changes that have been consulted on and agreed by the Council as part of the consultation on the 2016/17 budget. The changes being made to the SCI relate to the methods this Council uses when publicising planning applications. These changes have arisen from a wider review of Council procedures with a view to making efficiencies and moving to a Digital By Design approach where possible.
4. The Budget Council on 24th February 2016 agreed as part of its Budget making process that neighbour notification letters for planning applications would no longer be sent out and would be replaced by Site Notices once effective alerts and online systems were implemented. This approach meets the publicity requirements set out in the General Development Management Order 2015.
5. The Council's recently launched online self-service system – "My Hastings" enables interested parties to search for information about planning applications in their area and register for email updates. In light of this, the Statement of Community Involvement, which advises that the Council will send out neighbour notification letters in relation to planning applications, needs to be amended to refer to Site Notices only. Paragraphs 5.42, 5.45, 5.53 of the 2014 version of the SCI subsequently need to be revised. Appendix A of this report shows the relevant paragraphs and the associated changes needed to update the SCI.
6. This update is necessary to help ensure that members of the community and planning applicants are fully informed about the methods the Council is currently utilising to meet and comply with, the regulatory requirements which relate to the publicising of planning applications. This revised approach to publicity will take effect following Cabinet's approval and adoption of the revised SCI.

Next Steps

7. Following Cabinet approval, the updated SCI will be published on our website. Paragraph 5.41 and other factual and minor elements of the SCI, such as weblinks, name changes and out-of-date references to draft planning documents, will also be updated. Members of the community will be made aware that the revised approach to planning application publicity has now come into effect through a news release and social media (Facebook and Twitter).

Policy Implications

8. Equalities & Community Cohesiveness: As part of the Council's Customer First and Digital by Design aspirations, planning application information will be available online, accessible via handheld devices or via public access points such as the Customer Contact Centre and Hastings library via the My.Hastings 'My Area' portal.
9. Local People's Views: The proposal was included in the draft Budget and Corporate Plan consultation process for 2016/17. The equalities impact assessment identified the change as Low impact on any specific equality groups.

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	No

Additional Information

Appendix A: Updated wording for paragraphs 5.41, 5.42, 5.45, 5.53.

Officer to Contact

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