

Report to Cabinet

23 February 2022

Subject:	Approval for consultation of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2022
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth Councillor Iqbal Padda
Director:	Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Key Decision:	Yes (c) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough
Contact Officer:	Planning Officer, Zoe Wilson zoe_wilson@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to consult on the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 1.2 That the Director of Regeneration and Growth be authorised to make any minor amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement prior to circulation.





2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Planning shapes the places where people live and work. It seeks to ensure that there are jobs, homes, shops, parks and other important facilities available to everyone, while at the same time protecting and improving the environment.
- 2.2 As the planning system has the potential to affect everyone, it is only right that communities within Sandwell should be able to contribute to the preparation of plans and policies. It is equally important for communities to be involved in the process of considering planning applications.



- 2.3 Strong community involvement improves the quality and efficiency of decision making in Sandwell. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Sandwell Council will involve stakeholders such as; the public, developers, businesses and other agencies in the preparation of its planning policy documents and in the determination of planning applications. An SCI was adopted by Cabinet in 2016. This report proposes consultation on the revision of that document.
- 2.4 It is proposed that this draft Statement of Community Involvement is subject to a six-week consultation period. Responses will be considered, and any amendments will be the subject of a further report prior to adoption of the SCI.
- 2.5 An EIA has been carried out. No adverse impacts were identified, and no specific actions are required. This document provides further guidance to processes and arrangements for policies already adopted in the Black Country Core Strategy.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Engaging with customers early in the process can help deliver better quality development meeting their needs and those of future generations.
	Strong resilient communities Identifies how the community, including the residents, businesses and stakeholders can get involved in the planning process and how these views will be balanced
	A strong and inclusive economy Inclusion of businesses and stakeholders
	A connected and accessible Sandwell Planning transport matters contribute to making Sandwell better connected



4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Sandwell Council as the local planning authority is responsible for the preparation of the planning documents for the borough. The following documents make up the Local Development Framework; Local Development Scheme (LDS), Black Country Core Strategy, Area Action Plans, Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

4.2 The draft Statement of Community Involvement aims to set out simplified guidance for involving communities and is aimed at all those involved in planning. The document:

- Explains why community involvement is important in Sandwell and sets out the existing policy framework;
- Revises the existing (2016) Statement of Community Involvement
- Identifies the types of development and documents where community involvement is encouraged and to what extent.
- Proposes a variety of methods that detail how communities can become involved in the planning process. This includes; targeting specific community groups, enabling greater accessibility and recent technological shifts in the way the Sandwell Council communicate i.e. social media and live streaming.
- Explains how the Council deals with issues surrounding consultation due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19)

4.3 The Statement of Community Involvement supplements Policy CSP4 (Place Making) of the adopted Black Country Core Strategy (2011), and reflects the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 16) which states that ‘...plans should be shaped early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisation, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees’



- 4.4 The Council will encourage relevant stakeholders including communities, businesses, developers, statutory consultees and other external agencies to engage in the process, their role in the preparation of plans is crucial. We will ensure that every opportunity is given for engagement within the process and meetings can be arranged if necessary. Representation forms will be available to download on the council's website during the relevant consultation periods.
- 4.5 The period of consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement will run from March 2022 for a period of 6 weeks. During that time, the document will be able to be viewed at the reception area at Oldbury Council House as well as at West Bromwich Central library and on the Council's website. Notification of the consultation will be sent to statutory consultees and key stakeholders.
- 4.6 Any representations received during the consultation period will be considered and, where appropriate, will be incorporated in the final document which will be presented to Cabinet in 2022 for adoption.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative option would be to continue to use the SCI adopted in 2016. However, this document will not be up to date and would not tackle issues surrounding the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

6 Implications

Resources:	The costs of preparing the draft Statement of Community Involvement for Sandwell, and the consultation process will be met from existing budgets
Legal and Governance:	The current Development Plan for Sandwell includes the Black Country Core Strategy (currently being reviewed), the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document and a number of Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents. Following consultation and adoption, the Statement of Community Involvement will form part of the Local Development Framework suite of documents. The document is being prepared under the provisions of



	the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
Risk:	<p>The council's corporate risk management strategy has been complied with, to identify and assess the risks associated with this decision/recommendations. This has identified that there are no significant risks that need to be reported.</p> <p>In terms of the risks themselves, have we considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme risks in terms of whether there is sufficient capability and capacity to deliver the programme of work • Key dependencies (i.e. key people required to deliver the documents) • Budget/ financial risks
Equality:	An EIA has been carried out. This document provides further guidance to processes and arrangements for polices already adopted in the Black Country Core Strategy.
Health and Wellbeing:	Planning seeks to uphold the health and wellbeing of the community as a whole. Consultation on planning matters should therefore address health and wellbeing
Social Value	Through effective community involvement, people will feel more involved in the planning process, leading to better outcomes for everyone

7. Appendices

Draft Statement of Community Involvement

8. Background Papers

None

