

**Teignbridge District Council**  
**Executive Committee**  
**5<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**Part i**

**Report Title: Statement of Community Involvement**

**Purpose of Report**

To seek approval for the adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which we are required to update every 5 years.

**Recommendation**

That Executive resolves to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) November 2024 (Appendix 1) for the purposes of carrying out planning policy consultations and consulting on planning applications.

**Financial Implications**

These are as set out in section 3.1.  
Martin Flitcroft – Director - Corporate  
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**Legal Implications**

These are as set out in section 3.2.  
Paul Woodhead - S151 Monitoring Officer  
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**Risk Assessment**

These are as set out in section 3.3.  
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**Environmental/ Climate Change Implications**

These are as set out in section 3.4.  
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**Executive Member**

Cllr Gary Taylor - Executive Member for Planning

## **Appendices/Background Papers**

Appendix 1: Statement of Community Involvement 2024

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

### **1. Purpose**

1.1.1. To seek approval for the adoption of the updated 2024 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

### **2. Report Detail**

#### **2.1. Background**

2.1.1. The SCI is a legally required document that sets out how we will involve local communities, businesses and other interested parties when we prepare planning policy documents and determine planning applications.

2.1.2. The 2017 amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations requires SCIs to be reviewed every five years.

2.1.3. Our current SCI was adopted by the then Executive on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 which means it is now out of date and an updated one is required.

2.1.4. The SCI details the consultation Teignbridge District Council will undertake on planning policy documents, including the types of planning policy documents on which we will consult, who we will consult on these, the methods of engagement we will use and the timescales we will follow. It also sets out how we will consult on planning applications.

2.1.5. The updated SCI is largely unchanged from the 2019 version, as a review of the document has identified that it remains fit for purpose subject to some small amendments being made. These amendments are set out in section 2.2 and relate primarily to changes as a result of:

- Statutory requirements
- Technological changes
- One Teignbridge Council Strategy consultation

- 2.1.6. The SCI as proposed supports existing council initiatives, including the council's One Teignbridge strategy principles of *'The Way We Will Work'*, with the pledge to *'talk meaningfully with you about the projects and decisions that affect you and your area'*.
- 2.1.7. In 2019, a full consultation on the SCI was carried out. A number of key issues which were raised during this consultation were embedded in the SCI and are proposed to remain. These are:
- **Neighbourhood Plans:** Various responses felt that the SCI should have greater emphasis on Neighbourhood Planning. The SCI therefore includes specific sections relating to the advice and assistance we will provide to neighbourhood planning groups and the key stages involved in Neighbourhood Plan preparation.
  - **Views of Local People:** It was felt that the views of local people should be better considered when decisions are made. All consultation comments received are fully considered and either full or summarised responses are provided to ensure transparency.
  - **Length of Local Plan Documents:** Often, planning policy documents are technical and lengthy, which discourages involvement. The SCI makes a commitment to avoid jargon wherever possible. For the Local Plan review, this has been done by preparing plain English "need to know guides" for each stage of consultation.
  - **Site Notices:** There was a request that all nearby properties be written to when a planning application is submitted, rather than relying on a site notice and local press for publicity which may not be seen by all. The procedures carried out by the Council accord with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Development Management Procedure Order and have also been approved by the Council's Planning Committee. The procedure varies according to the nature of the application received. However, officers do have discretion to provide additional publicity if it is deemed necessary.

- **Social media:** It was requested that the Council makes greater use of social media to engage the public in planning issues. This commitment is included in the SCI and we now regularly use this as a key method of consultation engagement.

## 2.2. Amendments from 2019 SCI

2.2.1. The key amendments to the previously adopted 2019 Statement of Community Involvement are as follows:

- The 'Our Commitments' section on page 4 has been updated to reflect the priorities fed back through the One Teignbridge consultation and align the terms in the inclusivity principles to the Equality Act 2010.
- Document hyperlinks have been updated.
- Paragraph 2.17 has been updated to reference the use of AI technology to analyse consultation responses, including the processing of data by third parties.
- Paragraph 2.18 includes reference to planning documents being made available at the Council's Offices in accordance with regulation requirements.
- The Examination box on page 7 has been updated to reflect the most recent tests of soundness as set out in national policy.
- Paragraph 4.1 has been amended from 'may' to 'will' to clarify requirements.
- Paragraph 4.3 clarifies who will be sent the weekly list of validated planning applications.
- The list of consultees in Appendix 2 has been updated to reflect the latest wording in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Section 2  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/regulation/2>
- All dates and references have been changed to be accurate to November 2024.

### **3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact**

#### **3.1. Financial**

3.1.1. There are no direct financial implications of this updated SCI. Individual consultations relating to specific planning policy documents will address financial implications as they arise.

#### **3.2. Legal**

3.2.1. Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) places a legal requirement on Local Planning Authorities to have an adopted SCI. The 2017 amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations have also introduced a requirement to review the SCI every 5 years.

3.2.2. There is no statutory legal requirement to consult on the SCI. The current SCI which remains largely unchanged in this updated version was consulted on for an 8-week period alongside the Teignbridge Local Plan Review 2020-2040: Issues Consultation in May 2018. Responses to the recent consultation on the One Teignbridge Council Strategy in relation to how the Council engages with its communities have been incorporated where relevant into this update.

#### **3.3. Risks**

3.3.1. In the absence of an up-to-date SCI, we are unable to carry out legally compliant consultations on planning policy documents and are open to potential challenge of planning decisions if our consultation failed to be compliant.

#### **3.4. Environmental/Climate Change Impact**

3.4.1. The additional use of technology to carry out consultation will aid in our efforts to reduce carbon emissions which would typically have been produced in more traditional methods of consultation, including face-to-face meetings and the supply of paper document copies.

### **4. Alternative Options**

4.1.1. The recommendation is to approve the SCI as attached to this report. The alternatives are:

- **Amend the proposed Statement of Community Involvement:** If members are not in support of the SCI as proposed they could make amendments, but the SCI has been prepared with due weight to our regulatory requirements around planning consultations, our current processes and industry best practices, and the feedback from our community on their expectations of the work we will do.
- **Undertake further, more detailed consultation on the SCI:** If members are not in support of the SCI as proposed more public and stakeholder consultation could be undertaken to further broaden our evidence base. Due to the thorough existing work undertaken, and the delay this would cause to the updated SCI being in place, this is not recommended.

## **5. TIME-SCALE**

- 5.1.1. If approved, the SCI will come into effect on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and will be applied to all relevant future plan making and planning application duties.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1.1. The requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations as amended in 2017 require the Statement of Community Involvement to be reviewed on a five yearly basis. This review has been undertaken using information including best practice guidance from other local authorities and regulatory bodies, relevant updates to legislation, and from conversations with residents as part of the One Teignbridge strategy development.
- 6.1.2. The SCI as presented has been amended from the 2019 version in line with this information and reflects accurately the process by which we consult on planning policy documents in line with our obligations and the opportunities for effective consultation available to us. As such, it is recommended that this updated Statement of Community Involvement is adopted by the Executive.