

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) FOR THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Government's Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that the Council must, as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This document will outline the Council's approach to involving the public in the planning process.
- 1.2 This report seeks Members' approval for the amendments to be made to the submission draft SCI, and for this amended SCI to be adopted by the Council.
- 1.3 The submission version of the SCI has been examined by the Planning Inspectorate, who has recommended changes be made to the document prior to its adoption. These recommendations are binding on the authority.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The submission draft SCI was produced in line with various Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidance that has been published on SCIs and community participation in general, and having regard to the results of public consultation.
- 2.2 The SCI comprises the following:-
 - An explanation of what the SCI is, what is its purpose and what perceived benefits it will bring;
 - What techniques the Council will deploy in order to encourage public involvement and overcome perceived barriers to participation;
 - How and when planning matters will be publicised;
 - How and when people can get involved in the LDF, planning applications and enforcement;
 - Public involvement at the pre-application stage;
 - How the SCI links with other Council strategies;
 - Which representative groups and organisations will be consulted;
 - How the SCI will be reviewed; and
 - A list of useful planning contacts.
- 2.3 Following approval from Members in April 2006, the submission draft of the SCI was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration as to whether the document was sound under the provisions of Regulation 28 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
- 2.4 The Planning Inspectorate has determined that the SCI passes the nine tests of soundness, but has made some recommendations for minor amendments to be made to the document. These are laid out in Appendices 1 (Pre-Inquiry

Modifications) and 2 (Planning Inspectorate Inspector's Report and Recommended Changes).

- 2.5 Members are reminded that the Inspector's Report is binding upon the authority and that it may not change the recommendations in any way whatsoever. All of the recommendations must be implemented for the Council to be able to lawfully adopt the Statement of Community Involvement.

3 RISK IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Operational Risk

It is envisaged that the majority of the requirements that the Council will set itself in the SCI can be met using existing resources. Some of the public engagement techniques may require out of hours working, as was noted during the preparation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). Additional resources may be required to employ consultants on specific elements of community engagement.

3.2 Regulatory Risk

The timetable for the preparation, consultation on, and adoption of the SCI is contained within the adopted LDS. Failure to meet these deadlines may lead to action being taken against the Council by the ODPM or Regional Government Office. The performance of the SCI against the LDS may affect awards made through the Planning Delivery Grant scheme.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As stated in 3.1, the implementation of public engagement as set out in the SCI may require out of hours working and the employment of consultants.
- 4.2 As noted in 3.2, the ability of the Council to adopt its SCI within the time requirement outlined in the LDS is likely to affect awards made through the Planning Delivery Grant scheme.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The various legal implications are specified in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). These outline the implementation and consultation requirements for the SCI.
- 5.2 Section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) explains that the authority may not adopt the Statement of Community Involvement until modifications, as recommended by the Planning Inspectorate, have been implemented.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The SCI explains the arrangements to consult Parish Councils on planning policy and development control issues.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the Statement of Community Involvement for the Rochford District be amended as recommended by the Planning Inspectorate.
- (2) That the amended Statement of Community Involvement be adopted by the Council and put into use as the *Adopted Rochford District Statement of Community Involvement 2006*.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning and Transportation

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Samuel Hollingworth on:-

Tel:- 01702 318102

E-Mail:- samuel.hollingworth@rochford.gov.uk