

Committee: Borough Plan Advisory Committee

Date: 5th March 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Adoption of Merton's Statement of Community Involvement (planning)

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director for Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport;

Contact officer, Ann Maria Clarke, Strategic Planner, Future Merton

Recommendations:

- A. That the Borough Plan Advisory Committee advises Cabinet to adopt Merton's Statement of Community Involvement (planning)
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1. Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1 Merton's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will involve local people, local businesses, stakeholders and other interested parties when preparing development planning documents and submitted planning applications.
- 1.2 In October 2019 Merton's Cabinet resolved to undertake public consultation on a draft SCI. A total of 31 responses were received and the SCI has been updated with the findings (see appendix A). Updates are made in red text for clarity; this red text will be removed if the SCI is adopted.
- 1.3 This report recommends that the Borough Plan Advisory consider the updates to Merton's Statement of Community Involvement and recommend that Cabinet adopt it.

2. Details

- 1.4 In accordance with planning legislation, the draft SCI outlines:
- How and when the Council will involve local communities, businesses, voluntary sector and other interested parties in the production of development planning documents for example Local Plans, supplementary planning documents, neighbourhood plans and on submitted planning applications;

- The planning process;
 - How the Council will provide feedback to comments made during consultations;
 - The consultation methods to be used.
- 2.1 The consultation started on 28th October and closed on the 8th December 2019. A total of 31 response were received of which, 21 were from the online survey.
- 2.2 The following techniques were used to raise awareness of the consultation
- Notified all the names of individuals, groups and organisations held on the Local Plan database¹. These are made up of local residents, businesses, faith, environmental, civil and community groups.
 - Consultation awareness messages on the Council's social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.
 - In addition the Council placed adverts on Facebook.
 - iConsult alerts to residents and businesses signed up to the receive alerts (iConsult has circa 2000+ subscribers)
 - Dedicated webpage
 - Dedicated officer available to answer any questions by way of email, phone calls or invited to community groups/societies meetings.

Summary of responses received

- 2.3 The majority of responses welcomed a new SCI. During the public engagement two topic dominated the response received;
- Comments on the council's Design review panel
 - Representations on planning applications from individuals are no longer displayed in full on the council website.
- 2.4 The responses can be viewed on the [Council's website](#) and a summary of the public engagement can be found in the Consultation Statement (Appendix B)

Changes to the SCI

- 2.5 The following changes to the SCI were made in light of the responses received.
- Providing clarity and additional information on engagement tools/accessible engagement for Disabled people
 - Highlight the Council's 'Get Involved' webpage and alerts

¹ If you'd like to be added to our Local Plan consultation database.
Email: future.merton@merton.gov.uk

- Providing further clarity and explanation on the Pre-application and planning application processed, Design Review Panel.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 Officers consider that there are no reasonable alternatives to updating Merton's Statement of Community Involvement 2006. The SCI is a legal (statutory) document that must be complied with by all planning processes including the process of agreeing planning documents and making decisions on planning applications.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1 As set out in the body of the report.

5. Timetable

- 4.2 On adoption the SCI will become a supporting document to Merton's Local Plan. It is made available to view on the Council's webpage and a reference copy at Merton's libraries.

6. Financial, resource and property implications

- 6.1 The costs of preparing SCI fall within existing council budgets.

7. Legal and statutory implications

- 7.1 This SCI has been produced under section 18 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to prepare and maintain a SCI.

8. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

- 8.1 An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment was carried on during the production and adoption of the SCI.

9. Risk management and health and safety implications

- 9.1 No implications

10. Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- 10.1 Appendix A: Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
10.2 Appendix B: consultation statement on Merton's draft SCI

11. Background Papers – the following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report

- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 and
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)