

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOUSING AND PLANNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

19 July 2022

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Key Decision

1 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Council is currently working towards the preparation of its new Local Plan. As part of this work, it is important to consider and clearly set out how to successfully engage with statutory partners, residents, businesses and other interested parties. The Council wants to encourage more people to engage in planning the future of the borough which is considered to be a vital part of the planning process, and to give people the opportunity to be involved in the proposals which affect their communities from the earliest stages.
- 1.1.2 The requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was first introduced in Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), subsequently the Council adopted its first SCI in July 2005, this was updated in February 2015. The Covid 19 pandemic has more recently driven trends of on-line and digital engagement, which are considered within the updated document **[Annex 1]**.
- 1.1.3 An updated SCI has been prepared to ensure that the council effectively engages with all stakeholders in both the development of local planning policy and in taking decisions on planning applications, by setting out how and when people can contribute. The document also covers engagement matters relating to planning enforcement and tree matters.
- 1.1.4 The Localism Act 2011 places engagement with local communities at the heart of the planning system. Methods of engagement are based upon the Government's statutory requirements as set out in the Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO) 2015.
- 1.1.5 The Council must consult with certain organisations as set out in in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). These include specific consultation bodies, which are those who may have an interest in the subject of the proposed local plan; general consultation bodies, those considered appropriate by TMBC; and other stakeholders, which includes residents or other people including business representatives in the borough.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Council is however responsible for fulfilling its duties in accordance with planning legislation as referenced in the SCI.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 There are no direct financial or value for money considerations arising from this report.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 The Council should have an up-to-date SCI in place so that planning related community engagement and consultation practices can be clearly understood.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.5.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have relevance to the substance of the Equality Act 2010. The Council is committed to ensuring that consultation and engagement is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of gender, faith, race, disability, sexual orientation or age.
- 1.5.2 As set out in the SCI, arrangements will be made to make all documents available in alternative formats such as braille, should this be required. Assistance for those whose first language is not English will be provided, including, where appropriate the use of Language Line.

1.6 Recommendations

Cabinet be requested to:

- 1.6.1 **APPROVE** the adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement for development management and planning policy purposes.

Background papers:
Statement of Community Involvement - Annex 1

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