

CABINET

21 August 2006

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE (UPDATED RECOMMENDATIONS)

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 1215 - Statement of Community Involvement: Consultation Draft - 1 March 2006

CAB 1302 - Statement of Community Involvement: Results Of The Public Consultation Exercise - 26 July 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report updates the position in relation to the City Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). That particular document is a formal requirement of the recently revised planning system and will form a key component of the District's Local Development Framework (LDF) which will, in future, plan for and guide Winchester's development needs.

At its meeting on the 26 July 2006, Cabinet received a report on this matter which detailed the representations received in response to the publication of the Consultation Draft version of the SCI, in March of this year. The report's main appendix (Appendix A) went on to set out a series of amendments and revisions to the Draft, which it was recommended should be made, in order to arrive at a revised Submission Draft as the next stage in the SCI's emergence. However, in view of the complexity of the report and the time which had elapsed since the project's initiation in 2005, Cabinet resolved to defer detailed consideration of the report and its recommendations to enable full consideration to be given to the issues raised through public consultation.

Following discussions with the Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder, some of the recommended changes have been modified. This report sets out, at Appendix I, those recommended responses which have been changed from the main appendix A, attached to CAB1302.

A main purpose of the current report, which supplements and should be read in conjunction with the earlier CAB 1302 is, therefore, to set out in schedule form only those instances where a response to comments on the Draft SCI has been changed, including where a

recommended change to the Consultation Draft has been modified. In all other cases, the recommended change remains as set out in Appendix A to the report CAB1302.

At the Submission stage referred to above, the revised Draft version of the SCI will be published for a six-week period of formal public consultation, the beginning of which will coincide with the document's submission to the Secretary of State. This is due to take place before the end of August 2006. At the end of the six-weeks, the representations received will be used to inform the SCI's 'Examination' by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. This will be followed by the final stages of the process which will lead towards the SCI's eventual adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That Cabinet approve the changes set out and detailed in the report CAB 1302 and its associated Appendix A, as modified by any additional changes set out in Appendix I to this report and that, together, these should form the City Council's 'Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement'.
- 2 That Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive to proceed with the publication of public notices and the production of leaflets and other material required in connection with the revised Statement's submission to the Secretary of State if possible, during August 2006.
- 3 That Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport to make any minor editorial changes necessary prior to submission.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 26 July, Cabinet considered a report (CAB1302) which detailed recent work on the development of a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The report also set out the results of the consultation exercise conducted in March and April of this year, based on the Council's publication of a Consultation Draft version of its SCI.
- 1.2 However, in view of the complexity of this issue and the period of time which has elapsed since the initiation of the project, Cabinet resolved to defer the matter, for more detailed consideration at a special meeting of Cabinet on the 21 August 2006.
- 1.3 This report and Appendix I are intended to supplement the earlier report and its own principal appendix (Appendix A). Although the two reports are to be read in conjunction, importantly, Appendix I to this report highlights certain alterations to the recommended changes to the Consultation Draft, which have been discussed and agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport during the period since the earlier Cabinet meeting. Therefore, other than these particular variations, the recommended changes set out in schedule form, as Appendix A to CAB 1302, remain the primary basis for Recommendation 1 of this report.

2 The Results of the Public Consultation Exercise

- 2.1 Earlier this year, a Consultation Draft version of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was produced which incorporated the results of various front-loading exercises and events. At its meeting on the 1 March 2006, Cabinet approved the publication of the draft document for a six-week period of public consultation which commenced on the 16 March and ended on the 27 April 2006.
- 2.2 Following this period of consultation, 53 written responses were received and, in total, provided 192 separate comments on issues raised, or statements contained within the draft document. In addition to those written replies 31 questionnaires, which had been sent out to accompany the consultation document, were completed and returned.

3 Preparing the Submission Draft SCI

- 3.1 As stated above, the various issues raised, together with associated suggestions for change, are listed and summarised in the schedule attached to the report CAB 1302, at Appendix A. The schedule also contains responses to all the matters referred to, together with recommendations as to whether or not a change should be made to the

SCI. Taken together, the recommendations contained in Appendix A and the proposed variations contained in Appendix I to this report would form the revised version of the SCI, to be published for submission to the Secretary of State, if possible, by the end of August this year.

- 3.2 A wide range of issues were covered in the written responses, many of which made helpful and constructive comments and suggestions for revisions, corrections or other changes to this, the first public draft. Some of the main issues raised were highlighted in the earlier report (at Paragraphs 5.3 and 6.1).
- 3.3 As well as other more general and technical issues raised, there were a number of public comments which highlighted specific aspects of the Council's planning function and, in particular, issues concerning development control and Committee procedures. These suggested:-
- A clearer and more transparent protocol is needed, setting out with more certainty those who will be notified of new planning applications.
 - The SCI should commit to the aim of making officer reports available on the web, further in advance of decisions being made.
 - The Development Directorate should restore reporting back directly to objectors/supporters on planning decisions made.
 - Some form of Local Plan Committee should be reinstated, on the basis that Scrutiny Committees are not designed for the same degree of public involvement, or local commitment.
 - The Council should take back the responsibility for displaying site notices.

4 Conclusions and Recommendation

- 4.1 The publication of a first formal Draft of the Statement of Community Involvement, for public consultation and comment, marked a key stage in its emergence. The results of the recent consultation have also informed the further development and refinement of the Statement. This underlines what is very much an 'iterative' and adaptable process; and it is this process which is intended to deliver a Statement of Community Involvement which will be considered 'sound' in all aspects and can, therefore, be adopted by the Council.
- 4.2 It is, therefore, recommended that Cabinet should approve the combination of changes, contained in Appendix A to report CAB1302, as amended by changes listed in Appendix I to this report. These would then form the revised Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement, to be formally submitted to the Secretary of State for the following stage of 'examination' by an Inspector.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

5 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

The draft Statement of Community Involvement is in keeping with, and helps to carry forward, those Corporate Strategies for the Council to encourage and participate in open

debate with our residents, to be a learning organisation, sharing best practice and to ensure that everyone can play a full part in the life of their community

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Provision is made within the Strategic Planning Division's budget and the Local Plan Reserve, to meet the expected costs of producing and adopting the SCI.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Files, correspondence and background papers held in the Chief Executive's Unit and the Development Directorate.

APPENDIX:

Appendix I: 'Statement of Community Involvement, Public Consultation Draft (March 2006)': Schedule of Responses with Amended Recommendations.