

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation Response Form 2016

The Statement of Community Involvement explains how the council will carry out consultations around planning issues in the future. We want your comments on our approach as set out in the three sections of the Statement and to tell us if you think there is anything missing.

Any comments along with your name will be published in full on the council website. Your details will be used to inform you of future consultation events unless you inform us otherwise. If you wish for your comment to appear without your name, please tick the box. ✍

Q1 If you have any comments relating to 'Shaping the New Local Plan' section of the Statement of Community Involvement, please provide them below.

The key issue missing is a clear commitment to take responses seriously and amend the plan accordingly. Ironically, later in 4.27 it sets out very clearly how developers should do this in response to their community consultations. Wording based on 4.27 should be included here, possibly between 2.19 and 2.20 In 2.10, Neighbourhood Planning Forums should be added to the list alongside Parish Councils. Internet-based communication (2.11 and 2.12) is welcomed, but care needs to be taken, especially with polls, not to restrict the options.

(Your comment in full will appear on the website. Use a separate sheet if you need more space)

Q2 If you have any comments relating to 'Your Involvement in the Preparation of Neighbourhood Plans' section of the Statement of Community Involvement, please provide them below.

This is very thorough and welcome step-by-step guidance.

Your comment in full will appear on the website. Use a separate sheet if you need more space)

Q3 If you have any comments relating to 'Your involvement in the Development Management Process' section of the Statement of Community Involvement, please provide them below.

Paragraphs 4.7 - 4.11 (Approach to pre-application discussions) do not seem to be relevant to an SCI since they relate to the relationship between the Planning Department and applicants . They should be omitted from the SCI and published elsewhere.

4.12 The relevant documents must be online on the Public Access Website also within the first five days, and the 21 days consultation period should not start till all these pre-requisites are in place. Where the 21 days includes public holidays or the days between Christmas and New Year the period should be extended appropriately. When posting public notices, these should also be in streets which have properties abutting the property in question.

4.13 The final sentence should be amended to say "If significant material changes are made to applications, a further period of consultation will be required unless the relevant objections are withdrawn." The labelling of the entries on the Public Access website needs to be done much more carefully as when scanning a list of a hundred or more a mis-labelling can result in a comment being overlooked.

4.14 There should be a **requirement** for public exhibitions for major developments, not simply encouragement. Later 4.25 and 4.26 are in fact stronger. These sections need bringing together.

4.15 Responses should be seen **directly by Members of the Planning Committee**, not simply summarised for them by officers.

We would welcome a discussion with members and officers about this issue. When a matter is serious enough to be referred to Committee then surely it is incumbent on members to look at the source documents and not rely solely on the officers' summary. To do so would be to remove a large part of the reason for referring the application to the Planning Committee and would potentially be a failure of duty on the part of members.

Where the responses set out grounds for rejection or approval in terms of relevant policies and the NPPF, then the Committee Report must include these as a separate paragraph so that should the members decide to go against the officers' recommendation (or wish to add further reasons to those put forward by officers) then this can be cited. Currently this seems all too often to be done on the hoof resulting in decisions that are hard to defend at appeal. In complex cases officers should consult with respondents in drawing up this paragraph.

4.19 The reasons for not making a S106 agreement that has been requested by the community should always be given, not just usually.

4.20 to 4.22: these paragraphs do not describe any community involvement in the Planning Performance Agreements and so should be omitted from the SCI and published elsewhere.

4.23 Also, an annual report should be published setting out the number of complaints received and their outcome.

4.26 Add at end ",and will not validate any where pre-application consultation is mandatory."

4.27 Add a bullet point to require a description of the proposed scheme as put to consultees to be included. Developers have changed schemes after consultation, and not in response to comments, which can lead to an impression that no objections were received to what was in fact a late amendment.

(Your comment in full will appear on the website. Use a separate sheet if you need more space)

Q4 Do you have any other comments about the Statement of Community Involvement?

We have no further comments.

(Your comment in full will appear on the website. Use a separate sheet if you need more space)

About You

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Responding as **an Agent** (if you are making comments on behalf of other individuals or third-party organisation that you represent)

Do you want confirmation of your submitted comment? If yes, please state your preference
Yes please, by email.

We would prefer if you made your responses online at:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/consultation>

In order to make responses online, you will need to register unless you have already done so. This is quick and easy to do.

Please send the completed question response forms to reach us **by 13 May 2016** to:

FREEPOST SPATIAL POLICY