

Report to	<b>Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment</b>
Date	<b>7 November 2005</b>
Report By	<b>Director of Transport and Environment</b>
Title of Report	<b>Draft Statement of Community Involvement</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To seek approval of the draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation.</b>

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**To approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement for formal public consultation.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 Consultation on a draft Statement of Community Involvement is a statutory requirement. The expenditure involved on the public consultation is covered by existing budgets.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 One of the main aims of the new planning system, introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, is to strengthen community involvement. To make sure that local communities and stakeholders have active involvement throughout the planning process, all local authorities now have to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

2.2 The SCI is required to cover the Local Development Documents that the authority is responsible for producing, and the planning applications which it determines. For the County Council this includes all those Local Development Documents in its Minerals and Waste Development Scheme, and all planning applications for minerals and waste, and for the County Council's own service development. (e.g. schools, roads).

2.3 The SCI is itself a Local Development Document and is subject to consultation and examination. The process for the SCI starts with an informal scoping consultation, followed by formal consultation on a draft SCI. After considering the responses to the draft, a formal SCI will be submitted to Government and comments will be invited on it. The SCI will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, which will consider whether a Public Examination is required. In due course, the Planning Inspectorate will produce a binding report on the submitted SCI. The County Council will then have to make any changes required by the Planning Inspectorate, before adopting the SCI.

2.4 An informal scoping consultation was carried out with a wide variety of bodies and organisations in August/September this year. This sought their views on a range of methods of involving them in the preparation and consideration of Local Development Documents, and the consideration and determination of planning applications. Among the main points arising from this informal consultation was the increasing importance of the County Council's website and of e-mail as means of information and communication.

### **3. The draft Statement of Community Involvement**

3.1 The draft SCI for consultation is available in the Members' Room. The Planning and Highways Sub-Committee considered a draft of the part of the SCI dealing with planning applications at its meeting on 12 October. It noted that the principle of public speaking at committee was included in the draft SCI for consultation, and that a report on procedures, arrangements and guidance for the public is being produced by the Director of Law and Performance Management for consideration by Planning and Highways Sub Committee. Members asked for some changes to the wording of some issues in the draft SCI and these have been incorporated in the current draft. The Sub-Committee endorsed the development control aspects of the draft SCI for consultation purposes.

3.2 The statutory six week consultation period for the draft SCI is intended to run from 11 November to 23 December 2005. In accordance with Government requirements, a large number and range of bodies and organisations with interests in the County will be consulted directly. The draft SCI will be available in council offices and other deposit points. It will be advertised in the local press and placed on the County Council's website.

3.3 Following consultation, the Lead Member will be asked to consider the representations and any changes required to the draft SCI before it is submitted to Government.

### **4. Environmental Issues**

4.1 Environmental issues will be considered in each of the Development Plan Documents that the draft SCI refers to.

### **5. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

5.1 Public consultation on a draft SCI is a statutory part of the process of preparing an SCI. The eventual adoption of an SCI by the County Council will provide a clear and public statement of the ways in which the Council will involve the community in its planning responsibilities. It is proposed that a draft SCI is published for public comment.

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Local Member(s): All

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

SCI scoping consultation notes and questionnaire.  
Report to Planning and Highways Sub-Committee 12 October 2005.