

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 15 APRIL, 2010  
title: REVISION TO STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND  
ASSOCIATED PUBLIC CONSULTATION  
submitted by: STEWART BAILEY - DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
principal author: PHIL DAGNALL – ASSISTANT PLANNING OFFICER

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 To report on the revisions to the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the need for the authority to submit it to a consultation prior to adoption.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The revision of this document will have a bearing on our future ability to adopt planning policy documents and therefore could influence future development within the borough. This will have relevance to Council ambitions relating to environmental enhancement, economic development and many other issues.
- Community Objectives – Through the planning system to maintain, protect and enhance the natural and built features that contribute to the quality of the environment.
- Corporate Priorities – To provide a high quality environment, to conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area and enhance our built environment.
- Other Considerations – None.

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement or SCI. This is not a planning policy document but a detailed statement of how the planning authority will consult with all individuals and organisations as it develops new policy documents. As the authority goes about developing policy documents it must then follow the processes and commitments it makes within the SCI or risk that the Planning Inspectorate may find those developing policy documents unsound and reject them.

Briefly an SCI should:

- Explain clearly the process and methods for community involvement for different types of local development documents and for the different stages of plan preparation, with particular emphasis on engaging diverse sections of the community.
- Explain the process and appropriate methods for effective community involvement in the determination of planning applications, including the authority's approach to pre-application discussions.

- Include the authority's approach to community involvement in planning obligations (S106 Agreements).
- Include information about how the SCI will be monitored, evaluated and scrutinised at the local level
- Include details of where community groups can get more information on the planning process.
- Identify how landowner and developer interests will be engaged.

### 3. RECENT GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

3.1 Government legislation on the process of producing local planning policy documents and the SCI has recently changed and therefore we will need to revise our 2007 adopted version to reflect these and also incorporate any recent experience we have had that warrants making other amendments.

3.2 Some of the changes the government propose refer to how the SCI sits within the raft of LDF documents. They therefore relate to which bodies examine and comment on it and any revisions to it, rather than to the actual text or content of the document. These are:

- That the SCI no longer needs to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for independent examination, but revisions to it will need to be consulted on.
- In preparing an SCI the Council will not need to consult the Secretary of State for Transport.
- That the SCI will no longer need to be mentioned within the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS lays out the timescales for the production of LDF related policy documents.

3.3 Other government changes do affect the content of the document. These are:

- That within the list of statutory consultees, ie those bodies who must be consulted on the production of development plan documents, planning authorities must now include the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA). This amendment has been made within Appendix 1 of the revised SCI.
- Also in terms of statutory bodies, that the Secretary of State for Transport should be consulted on railway and roads through local branches of Network Rail and the Highways Agency respectively. These changes have also been made within Appendix 1 of the SCI.
- Also the Government has recently streamlined the various consultation stages each development plan document must go through and these changes have been incorporated within Section 2.2 of the revised SCI.

#### 4 OTHER CHANGES

- 4.1 In addition to these legislative changes, the document had also been revised to more clearly acknowledge the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Council's Consultation Strategy and the need, where possible, to co-ordinate consultations to avoid "consultation fatigue" and the duplication of resources. These changes are in a revised Section 3 (Inter-relationships with Other Programmes).
- 4.2 Also Section 4.2 of the SCI deals with involving the community in planning applications and this now incorporates a reference to the new charging scheme for pre-application advice.

#### 5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – No immediate implications.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The SCI is a statutory requirement of the new planning process. The consultation exercise will enable the Council to revise it to take into account new legislation.
- Political – No direct political implications.
- Reputation – The Council would wish to emphasise through the SCI that it values and encourages public consultation on the planning process and that the public's views are important.

#### 6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 Instruct the Director of Development Services to make the document available for consultation for a period of six weeks and then, if no matters of significance are raised as a result, in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee the Statement of Community Involvement be adopted.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4530.