

Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee

22 October 2010

Agenda Item No. 8

AUTHOR	Joint Officer Team (JTU): Chris Butcher
SUBJECT	Update to the Luton and South Bedfordshire Statement of Community Involvement
PURPOSES	To inform the Joint Committee of the latest progress on the Statement of Community Involvement.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the Joint Committee approves the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2010 Update for consultation purposes.
REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS	To enable the JTU to consult on Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Spatial Planning Documents (SPDs) against an updated Statement of Community Involvement.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 brought in the requirement for local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of the Local Development Framework. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the community will be involved in the planning process.
- 1.2 The Luton and South Bedfordshire Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in December 2007 and lists a wide variety of different consultation methods that are likely to be suitable. The preparation of Local Development Documents, such as the Core Strategy, as well as consultation on planning applications should be carried out in compliance with the SCI.

2. THE NEED FOR AN UPDATE

- 2.1 The planning regulations were amended in 2008 (The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008) and a revised Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning was issued. The changes to planning law and regulations include changes to the process of planning policy document production. Following these amendments, a review of the adopted SCI was required.
- 2.2 The amendments to the Regulations have been made to reduce the number of stages in the Local Development Framework (LDF) process before a Development Plan Document can be adopted. This has been achieved by deleting the Preferred Options stage, and by removing the requirement for SCIs to undergo an Examination in Public.

3. CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION PROCESS

- 3.1 The SCI December 2007 has been updated to reflect these changes in the form of a draft Statement of Community Involvement 2010 Update. The draft SCI has been subject to internal consultation with both Luton and Central Bedfordshire Officers and any comments have been reflected in the document.
- 3.2 Following approval at this Joint Committee, the draft SCI 2010 Update will be consulted on for a six-week formal consultation period with stakeholders. Following this the representations will need to be considered and the SCI finalised. The SCI 2010 updated document can then be formally adopted in the early part of 2011.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional financial implications related to the progressing of the DPDs and SPDS including consultation of the Statement of Community Involvement. Provisions are already made within the LDF core budget for printing, consultation and other costs associated with each DPD or SPD.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The review of the SCI has been necessitated by amendments made by Central Government to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations. The draft revised LDS timetable is also necessary to ensure that the joint committee can effectively and efficiently management the delivery of the LDF according to resource planning.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The wider LDF has been assessed by a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report that considers equalities issues. This scoping report and associated equalities content has been taken forward to produce a Sustainability Appraisal for the draft submission Core Strategy.
- 6.2 A separate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was also conducted on the Core Strategy Preferred Options. The draft submission Core Strategy was prepared in-line with the preferred options and the recommendations of the associated EqIA.

Appendix

Appendix A - Luton and South Bedfordshire Statement of Community Involvement 2010 Update