

CABINET	DATE 18 September 2024	ITEM NO 8
TITLE Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Developers' Engagement Charter (DEC)	WARD(S) All	
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills	CABINET MEMBER Planning, Estate Renewal and Development	
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Non-Key Decision Subject to call-in Non-exempt appendices	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes	

1. Decision required

1.1. This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

1.1.1. To agree to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Developers' Engagement Charter (DEC)

2. Links to Our Greenwich missions

2.1. This report relates to the Council's agreed missions as follows:

- People will not experience discrimination
- Development delivers positive change to an area for existing and new communities
- Neighbourhoods are vibrant, safe and attractive with community services that meet the needs of local residents
- The voluntary, community and socially motivated sectors in Greenwich are strengthened and able to provide more support to the most in need
- Our Council is better at listening to communities, and communities feel they are heard
- We develop networks with communities, key partners and businesses to meet need and address challenges together
- We design our services around the needs of our residents
- Our Council works in the most efficient and effective ways possible

2.2. The updated SCI and DEC will help deliver the above missions by ensuring the input of local communities throughout all aspects of the planning process.

3. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 3.1. The purpose of this report is to adopt the updated and final SCI and DEC.
- 3.2. The SCI is a statutory planning document which sets out the ways in which the Council will engage with residents, communities, businesses, local organisations and other groups to ensure as many people as possible are able to contribute to the plan-making process and input on individual planning decisions that affect them.
- 3.3. The DEC is aimed at those developing land in Royal Greenwich to ensure best practice in early engagement with local residents, businesses and community organisations prior to formal planning applications being made.
- 3.4. Public consultation was undertaken on the SCI and DEC through the Commonplace platform from 25 March to 28 April 2024. 72 comments were received cumulatively on the two documents, and the Council's responses to these are detailed in the Consultation Statement (Appendix C). This has resulted in minor amendments to the draft SCI and DEC.

4. Introduction and Background

- 4.1. The Council is required under legislation to update the SCI every five years to ensure there is effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process.
- 4.2. The new SCI will replace the Royal Borough of Greenwich's previous SCI dated 2016, which was partially updated in 2020 to reflect the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.3. The new SCI will reflect recent societal changes in terms of how people communicate and locate information as well as new ways local planning authorities can engage with a variety of stakeholders.
- 4.4. Furthermore, the aim of the new SCI is to be written as an easy-to-read guide which is accessible to the wider public, and to ensure they understand how they can be involved in the planning process.
- 4.5. The DEC is non-statutory guidance aimed at those developing land in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The guidance outlines successful engagement activities that can be undertaken by developers to inform and engage people on

individual planning proposals before they are formally consulted at planning application stage.

- 4.6. Public consultation was held on the draft SCI and DEC from 25 March to 28 April 2024. The draft documents were made publicly available on the Council's Commonplace platform and in libraries and residents were invited to review and provide feedback.
- 4.7. 42 comments were received on the SCI and 28 comments were received on the DEC. Feedback was received from a variety of stakeholders including residents/members of the public, resident associations and organisations.
- 4.8. Each comment has been reviewed and responded to by Officers, detailed in the Consultation Statement (Appendix C). Based on the feedback received there have been minor amendments to the draft SCI and DEC to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the documents. The final iterations of the SCI and DEC are attached to this report (see tracked documents at Appendices A and B).

5. Available Options

- 5.1. Option 1: To agree to adopt the new SCI and DEC.
- 5.2. Option 2: Do not agree to adopt the new SCI and DEC in their current form.
- 5.3. Option 3: Do nothing. Do not adopt the new SCI and DEC.

6. Preferred Option

- 6.1. The preferred option is Option 1. Adopting the new SCI and DEC will ensure that Royal Greenwich has current, best practice and community-informed SCI and DEC to ensure effective and meaningful consultation with the community, and ensure the Council complies with planning legislation.
- 6.2. Options 2 and 3 would mean the Council is unable to adopt the new SCI and DEC and would have to rely on the existing out-of-date SCI. Not adopting the revised new SCI would result in the Council contravening its statutory obligation to prepare and update its SCI every five years. In addition, Council would be left with a SCI that does not reflect the current context or wishes of the community. Not adopting the SCI and DEC could also present reputational risk for Royal Greenwich having consulted the community on both documents.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1. The new SCI and DEC provide modern, up-to-date commitments and strategies to provide meaningful community engagement throughout the planning process. This delivers both positive outcomes for local people and can improve the delivery, design and innovation of development planning and policy planning outcomes through feedback received. The updated new SCI and DEC have been consulted on with the local community and feedback received reflected in the final versions.
- 7.2. Adopting the new SCI and DEC will allow the Council and developers to have up-to-date strategies for consultation on new development proposed and new planning policies.

8. Consultation Results

Summary of consultation undertaken

- 8.1. A four-week formal public consultation was carried out on the SCI and DEC, from 25th March to 28th April 2024 in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012 and the procedures set out in the Council's existing SCI. The following consultation activities were undertaken for the SCI and DEC:
- An announcement post was published on the Royal Greenwich website with a link taking people to the Commonplace Platform.
 - The Commonplace platform provided an explanation of how community consultation, and developer engagement is carried out by the Planning Department currently, along with the draft PDF files for both the SCI and DEC, and questionnaire form for each consultation, to obtain feedback.
 - For accessibility purposes, the Commonplace post was signposted with a message about inclusivity, inviting people to email or call the planning policy team if the consultation was not accessible to anyone. Additionally, printed copies of the Commonplace consultation were distributed in the Royal Borough's main local libraries, and in some community centres. The text on Commonplace was checked as being screen readable.
 - The consultation was also publicised through an announcement post in the printed information sheet Greenwich Info, in the Council's e-newsletter and in its staff newsletter Talk Greenwich.

- Social media posts were made on X, Facebook and LinkedIn, over a range of dates during the consultation period.
- Notifications were sent to everyone on the Planning Policy Consultation Database, and to contacts who the Council has engaged with on previous Commonplace consultation exercises (including over 1000 entries, including specific and general consultation bodies, local residents, businesses, residents/amenity societies, other interest groups, landowners, developers and other interested parties).

8.2. Direct Consultees included specific consultation bodies set out in legislation and other statutory bodies, local amenity/residents' groups, businesses, landowners, developers and individual residents.

8.3. The majority of comments received were anonymous comments via Commonplace, with the remaining comments being sent via email to the Planning Policy team email address. The emails received were from one public body (Transport for London), two Residents Associations and one resident. Of the 66 comments received, 17 (25.8%) resulted, directly or indirectly, in changes being made to the SCI and DEC drafts via either changes to text or tables.

SCI consultation results:

8.4. Consultation was undertaken on the draft SCI and DEC from 25 March to 28 April 2024 via Commonplace. The consultation on the SCI contained questions that covered:

- how people would like to be informed about consultations on planning;
- how people would like to give feedback on consultations on Council planning duties;
- what parties people would prefer to do engagement with;
- whether people would like to participate or volunteer in a local democratic process, for example a city assembly or a community review panel; and
- what information participants would like to see in the final SCI document.

8.5. A total of 42 comments were received on the SCI. The results are detailed in the Consultation Statement in Appendix C.

DEC consultation results:

8.6. The consultation on the DEC contained questions that covered:

- how people would like to be informed by developers about community engagement activities;
- based on the provided methods, what methods people are likely to participate in;
- how developers can encourage meaningful community engagement;
- whether there are other engagement activities people would like to add;
- what do people think should be included in the final DEC.

8.7. A total of 28 comments were received on the DEC. The results are detailed in the Consultation Statement in Appendix C.

9. Next Steps: Communication and Implementation of the Decision

9.1. If approved, the Council will notify everyone on Commonplace and the Council’s planning policy database that the SCI and DEC have been adopted. This will include releasing an adoption notice and making the final SCI and DEC documents available online on the Royal Greenwich’s website.

10. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	<p>The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) requires the local planning authority to prepare a ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ (SCI) which seeks to ensure the active, meaningful and continued involvement of the local community and stakeholders throughout the planning process.</p> <p>The legislation prescribes the matters that the SCI must contain. Section 18 was amended by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 to require that the SCI must include policies for providing advice and assistance in relation to neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>The Developers’ Engagement Charter (DEC) forms part of the SCI and sets out how the community can expect to be</p>	<p>Eleanor Penn, Assistant Head of Legal Services (Planning & Procurement), 22nd August 2024 Ref: 96818</p>

	<p>consulted by developers through the planning process.</p> <p>The SCI is a local development document (not a development plan document) and there is no formal requirement for consultation. However, it is common practice for local authorities to consult and the Council has consulted on previous versions of the SCI, and therefore has done the same here and amendments have been made to the SCI and DEC.</p> <p>The decision to adopt the new SCI and DEC falls to the Cabinet under Part 3 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution (agree supplementary planning documents following consultation).</p> <p>The Human Rights Act 1998 imposed a duty on RBG as a public authority to apply the European Convention on Human Rights; RBG must not act in a way which is incompatible with these rights. The SCI and DEC to which this report refers is not considered to be contrary to the Human Rights Act 1998 and equalities have been considered by RBG through an equalities impact assessment.</p>	
Finance and other resources	<p>Cabinet is requested to agree to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Developers' Engagement Charter (DEC).</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.</p>	<p>Sue Rock Accountancy Business Change Manager</p> <p>21/08/2024</p>
Equalities	<p>Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of</p>	<p>Anna Stevens, Senior Principal Policy Officer, 21 June 2024</p>

	<p>opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper could directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are immediately below. Further information is also available in the equality impact assessment attached at Appendix D.</p> <p>As part of the Council’s commitment to equality and equity, the SCI indicates the Council will consult with a range of groups and members of the community and as highlighted by the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that we capture the views of a broad range of local groups that represent different interests in the area. The Equalities Impact Assessment, which supports the SCI and DEC, assesses the impact of the SCI and DEC on people with protected characteristics in our communities.</p> <p>The SCI and DEC contributes to the Council’s Equality and Equity Charter and the Council’s Equality Objectives 2020-2024, through proposing early and meaningful engagement with the communities and providing advice to developers on what engagement methods can be undertaken so consultation is accessible for all.</p>	
Climate change	The report makes no contribution to the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan agreed by Cabinet on 18 November 2020.	Anna Stevens, Senior Principal Policy Officer, 21 June 2024

Risk Management	<p>The proposal to adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement and Developers’ Engagement Charter is considered very low risk and is in line with the Council’s cautious approach to risk management. Both documents in themselves assist in mitigating risk as they provide clear expectations, process and outcomes for the Council and developers’ engagement and consultation with the community during planning processes and development proposals and have been informed by community feedback on the draft iterations of these documents. Any risks that arise will continue to be monitored and managed in line with the Council’s risk management Toolkit.</p>	<p>Anna Stevens, Senior Principal Policy Officer, 21 June 2024</p>
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11. **Report Appendices**

11.1. The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Statement of Community Involvement
- Appendix B: Developers’ Engagement Charter
- Appendix C: SCI and DEC Consultation Statement
- Appendix D: Equalities Impact Assessment

12. **Background Papers**

12.1. [Royal Greenwich Statement of Community Involvement 2020](#)

Report Author: Anna Stevens – Senior Principal Policy Officer
 Tel No. 020 8921 6235
 Email. anna.stevens@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Reporting to: Michael Clarkson – Planning Policy Manager
 Tel No. 020 8921 8915
 Email. michael.clarkson@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Pippa Hack – Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills
 Tel No. 020 8921 5519
 Email. pippa.hack@royalgreenwich.gov.uk