

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 6 September 2021

Report author: Spatial Planning Manager

Title: SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan - Statement of Community Involvement

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) will provide a South West Hertfordshire integrated strategic planning framework and supporting evidence base to support sustainable growth to 2050.
- 1.2 The draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the JSP, Appendix 1, sets out how Watford Borough Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City & District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Hertfordshire County Council (referred to as 'the Councils'), will engage stakeholders and the public in preparation of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan. The SCI is a statutory document required for plan-making.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Uncoordinated approach between the five SW Herts local authorities and HCC.	Ineffective consultation and additional consultation required. Reputational damage of local authorities through public criticism and undermining the integrity of the JSP.	Discussion and agreements reached through the Joint Strategic Plan members and officers working groups. Agree the Statement of Community Involvement for the JSP.	Treat	4

Legal challenge	It is a legal requirement to have an SCI to support the preparation of a statutory plan that will shape development in an area. Financial costs to overcome challenge. Delay to the timetable.	Approve SW Herts Statement of Community Involvement	Treat	3
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3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That, Cabinet approves the South West Hertfordshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for consultation.

Further information:

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Report approved by:

Ben Martin, Head of Planning and Development

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 The role of a Statement of Community Involvement is to set out the Councils' approach for involving the community, both in preparing and revising planning policy documents and, where appropriate, in the assessment of planning applications.

4.2 The SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) covers the Local Authority areas of Dacorum, St Albans, Three Rivers, Watford and Hertsmere. Along with the County Council, the JSP will look at the long term future and ambitions for SW Herts, as well as the strategic growth opportunities until 2050.

4.3 The proposed SCI for the JSP is limited in scope, covering only the consultation that will be carried out as part of the strategic plan-making process. The SCI supporting the JSP will not have any implications for Watford's existing SCI that is related to the Watford Local Plan. Development Management matters will remain the responsibility of the local authority area in which they are located and consultation

on planning applications will therefore continue to be governed by the SCI for the relevant council area.

- 4.4 The content of the SCI reflects the requirements of relevant national planning regulations governing statutory plan consultation, whilst also highlighting the increasing importance of online messaging, through social media and other platforms, in raising awareness of plan consultations. This is consistent with approaches set out in the SCI that supports the preparation of the Watford Local Plan.
- 4.5 In accordance with the JSP governance structure, the SW Herts JSP Planning Members Group (SPMG), which comprises the Planning Portfolio Holder/Leader for each of the SW Herts authorities, has considered the draft SCI, and the principle of having more detailed consultation strategies for each consultation stage. All have advised that they are happy with this approach. Informal, high level advice has also been taken. They have advised that a separate SCI for the JSP is required and have also advised that the document should set out how the councils will meet the necessary regulatory requirements and ideally exceed these, especially through the use of online engagement and social media.
- 4.6 Hertfordshire County Council do not need to formally endorse the SCI but have confirmed their support for the approach set out within it.
- 4.7 There is no longer a legal requirement to consult on the content of SCIs. However, this Council, and a number of the other Councils within the SW Herts area, have previously chosen to carry out targeted engagement on their documents. For consistency it is therefore recommended that this approach is applied to the SCI for the SW Herts JSP.
- 4.8 The SW Herts JSP Director will co-ordinate consultation with statutory consultees. These are listed in Appendix 1 of the document. Individual districts will be responsible for carrying out any consultation they feel is appropriate with relevant local consultees. As the SW Herts SCI does not cover planning application matters, it is not considered necessary to consult local planning agents and developers.
- 4.9 Provided that approval to consult on the SCI is granted by all five SW Herts districts, targeted consultation will be carried out on the SW Herts JSP SCI for a 6 week period. This is currently scheduled for autumn 2021.
- 4.10 Following the consultation, the SCI will then be brought back to Cabinet to seek formal approval for the final version of the document, incorporating any changes required as a result of the consultation process.

4.11 Members should note that formal approval for the SCI from all five districts that make up the SW Herts JSP area must be in place before any statutory consultation on the SW Herts JSP takes place.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the Council contributes £40,000 annually to the JSP project which is the same as the other SW Herts local authorities. This is supported by external funds that have been provided by Central Government. Costs associated with consultation will come out of this budget.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the legal implications are contained in the body of the report.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 None for the purpose of this report. The SCI seeks to ensure that consultation arrangements enable all sectors of the community to engage with planning processes.

5.3.2 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 N/A

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 N/A

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 N/A

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 N/A

Appendices

- Appendix A: South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Statement of Community Involvement

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.