

<b>Item No.</b> 1	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 15 September 2005	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Regeneration & Resources Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Statement of Community Involvement	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Regeneration	

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Regeneration & Resources Scrutiny Sub-Committee provide initial comment on the draft Statement of Community Involvement and accompanying guidance notes set out in Appendix A. Any comments made by Regeneration & Resources Scrutiny Sub-Committee will be reported to the Executive prior to the draft Statement of Community Involvement being submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2005.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into force in October 2004. This act introduced a new planning system and a new form of development plan called a Local Development Framework.
3. The Local Development Framework consists of a number of separate documents prepared at different times relating to different matters. This is intended to make the planning system faster, more flexible and more responsive.
4. Some of these documents will have similar status to development plans under the current system (Section 54A status) and will be known as Development Plan Documents. Others will have similar status to current supplementary planning guidance and will be known as Supplementary Planning Documents.
5. The Statement of Community Involvement is one of the new Development Plan Documents to be prepared. The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement is to set out the process of community involvement that will be undertaken in the development and review of planning documents and processing planning applications. This involves outlining who will be involved, when they will be involved and how they will be involved.
6. After the Statement of Community Involvement is adopted all other planning documents prepared under the new system will need to comply with the processes set out within it.
7. The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement is a formal process set out in government guidance (PPS12 and the Companion Guide to PPS12). The

council will formally adopt the Statement of Community Involvement after it has been through formal consultation, submitted to the Secretary of State and has been subject to an external examination in public by a government appointed inspector.

8. The Local Development Scheme, presented to the Planning Committee on 18 January, Executive on 1 February 2005 and the Government Office for London (GOL) on 18 March, sets out a timetable for the production of the Statement of Community Involvement. This timetable started in June 2005 leading to formal adoption in June 2006.
9. The draft Statement of Community Involvement has been developed within the context of national guidance. It outlines how and when the Southwark Council will consult the community in the preparation, alteration and review of local development documents and processing of planning applications. The guidance notes incorporated within the draft document explain in further detail what the Statement of Community Involvement is and how it fits into the new planning framework. The notes provide information on where the community can go for independent help and guidance on how to make a representation.

## **CONSULTATION**

10. The development of the Statement of Community Involvement requires two rounds of statutory public consultation to be undertaken before submission to the Secretary of State. The first round of consultation finished on 2 September and was aimed at finding out what the local community wanted included within the Statement of Community Involvement.
11. The first round of consultation did not involve a draft document and was more of an information gathering process. The information collected in the first round of consultation was used to help formulate a draft Statement of Community Involvement.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Transparency of process**

12. The key function of the draft Statement of Community Involvement is to outline in detail what processes will be followed to involve the community in the development and review of planning documents and the processing of planning applications.
13. The Statement of Community Involvement will enable the public and community stakeholder groups to have a clearer understanding of planning processes and to know at what stages they will be able to get involved in the development and review of planning documents and the processing of planning applications.
14. The process of producing the Statement of Community Involvement provides the local community with a sense of ownership over the content of the document, provides transparency of involvement and clarifies expectations of community involvement. It also helps to increase overall community awareness on planning matters and the new planning system.

### **Hard to reach groups**

15. The draft SCI outlines the Council's commitment to the involvement and engagement of hard to reach groups in the planning process.

### **Corporate objectives**

16. The draft SCI has been developed with consideration to the Community Strategy and will contribute to meeting key corporate objectives. This is important in relation to meeting equalities objectives and providing access for all residents to participate.

### **What Happens Next?**

17. This draft will then be adopted for a second round of consultation. This second period of consultation is scheduled to run for a six-week period, from 23 September until 4 November 2005. During this period the community and other stakeholders will be asked to provide formal representations on the draft document. The information gathered through responses to this second round of consultation will be used to help write the final SCI that will be submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2005 after approval from Executive in November 2005.

### **LEGAL COMMENT**

18. Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides for the Statement of Community Involvement ('SCI'). The preparation of this Statement is now a statutory requirement and will expand upon the existing public involvement in determining planning applications, and shaping planning policies. The Act states that *'the SCI is a statement of the authority's policy as to the involvement in the exercise of the authority's...of persons who appear to the authority to have an interest in matters relating to development in their area'*
19. There is no time limit within which the SCI must be adopted but, once it has, the local planning authority must comply with it and this will affect the preparation of Local Development Documents. The SCI does not, however, have to be prepared before other Local Development Documents, but there is an expectation that it will be prepared at an early stage.
20. The SCI is a key policy tool which has emerged from the government's reform agenda for planning, combined with an emphasis on sustainable development. It will be a statement of the local planning authority's policy on public participation and will affect both future plan-making and the development control process.
21. Paragraphs 2 to 9 above set out the background to this new requirement. The SCI, once approved and adopted, will have the status of a Local Development Document comprising policy statement about public participation in the planning process, subject to the Development Plan Document procedures for its public examination, adoption, and withdrawal. The Act provides that the SCI may also become a Development Plan Document if the authority wishes.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

22. There are significant positive implications for equal opportunities in both the development of the Statement of Community Involvement and the final adopted document.
23. The consultation process provides the opportunity for those groups to convey how they would like to be consulted with in accordance with any restriction or limitations they may have that affect their ability to participate. This is particularly relevant to those groups who may require translation services, have mobility issues, are under-resourced or have other special need requirements.
24. The draft Statement of Community Involvement has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Appendix B.

## **APPENDICES:**

- Appendix A: Draft Statement of Community Involvement (incorporating guidance notes)**
- Appendix B: Consultation Plan for the Second Round of Consultation**
- Appendix C: Sustainability Appraisal**
- Appendix D: Equalities Impact Assessment**

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
	Planning Policy Team Chiltern House	Kirstin Clow

**Audit Trail**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Julie Seymour, Planning Policy Manager	
<b>Report Author</b>	Sarah Beuden Planning Policy and Regeneration Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	<i>Tuesday 6 September 2005</i>	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	Yes
<b>Executive Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>	<i>Tuesday 6 September 2005</i>	