

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 12 February 2025

6.30 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London
SE1 2QH

Supplemental Agenda No.2

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| 6. | Statement of Community Involvement and Development Consultation Charter | 1 - 4 |

Enclosed is a summary note for the Statement of Community Involvement and Development Consultation Charter report, which has been produced for the overview and scrutiny committee meeting.

Contact

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Date: 10 February 2025

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

SCI/DCC Proposed Minor Changes – SUMMARY NOTE 10.2.25

Documents provided (Appendices to Cabinet Report):

- Proposed changes to validation checklist - Appendix 1
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - Appendix 2
- Development Consultation Charter (DCC) - Appendix 3
- Early Engagement Strategy - Appendix 4
- Engagement Summary – Appendix 5
- Equality Impact Needs Assessment – Appendix 6

What is the SCI/DCC?

The production of a Statement of Community Involvement is a statutory planning requirement which sets out how the Council will ensure that local communities, businesses and other stakeholders can be involved in local planning decisions.

The Development Consultation Charter forms part of Southwark's SCI. The DCC sets out how the Council expects developers to engage with and consult with our communities in 3 stages:

- *Stage 1: Engage*
- *Stage 2: Consult*
- *Stage 3: Inform*

The SCI/DCC was first adopted in April 2019. The current versions of the templates were adopted in December 2022. Consultation on the proposed changes to the SCI and DCC is currently underway, running for 6 weeks. It closes on 19 February 2025.

The Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) applies to Southwark Council. Applicants play a key role in supporting the Council to meet the PSED. The DCC work enables the Council to assess how the scheme complies with the PSED.

Why are changes being proposed?

The recommended updates to the SCI, DCC and templates will improve clarity for applicants and ensure alignment between the DCC requirements and current Council priorities. The changes aim to;

- Emphasise the importance of delivering social value through developments, in line with the Southwark 2030 strategy and Southwark Land Commission report
- Maintain high standards of community involvement
- Ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED).

The proposed minor changes to the templates are intended to make them clearer for applicants, remove duplication, increase transparency and clarify the requirement for engagement early on in the development process.

The recommended changes are part of a wider programme of service improvements being implemented across the planning department. These include improving the audit trail of consultee responses and ensuring a consistent approach is taken to the implementation of policy.

What do applicants need to submit?

Applicants of relevant schemes must meet the requirements of the DCC for all major applications and for Council owned applications of 1 dwelling and above. The DCC includes a set of templates. These are not mandatory, but set out the preferred scope of document submissions so that applicants can demonstrate the actions taken to meet the DCC requirements. The template are:

- Early Engagement Strategy (for pre-applications only)
- Engagement Summary
- Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment

What is the scope of the changes?

Changes to the DCC templates have been highlighted in blue or yellow. These proposed changes can be compared the existing, adopted templates and Validation checklist which are online. The changes are also described in the Cabinet report.

1. Validation checklist (Appendix 1)

The following changes are proposed to the validation checklist, covering the EES submission. The change provides clarification of when in the pre-application process an Early Engagement Strategy document should be submitted. This states that;

- We recognise that schemes come to pre-application meetings at a variety of stages in the design process. Many pre-apps are simply land-use or design queries, and often applicants want to know if the principle of the development is acceptable before investing further resources into the potential design of developments.
- Following validation of the pre-application: Once a scheme is established as broadly policy compliant, the requirement for an EES will be discussed with the case officer as part of the pre-application process.
- The EES should be submitted as a completed document when the planning application is submitted. Applicants should consider publishing a draft of the EES and draft plans before the application is submitted.

Threshold for DCC Requirements

- The threshold for the requirement of the DCC has been changed to all Council schemes creating one dwelling and above (previously all council schemes). See page 5 of the DCC (Appendix 3).
- This is to remove the requirement for templates for minor schemes such as changes to window or doors.

2. Amendments to SCI (Appendix 2)

- The changes are minor and relate to the correction of grammatical errors, formatting changes and clarifications in the description of DCC requirements.

3. Amendments to DCC (Appendix 3)

- The importance of delivering Social Value is emphasised using specific questions. This aligns with the Southwark 2030 Strategy and goals. See page 7 of Engagement Summary (Appendix 5).
- The diagram on page 4 provides clarification of when in the pre-application process an Early Engagement Strategy document should be submitted. Applicants are encouraged to publish a draft of the ESS and draft plans before the application is submitted. See page 4 of DCC (Appendix 3).

Amendments to Early Engagement Strategy and Engagement Summary (Appendix 4 and 5)

- Monitoring revealed that parts of the EES and ES were unclear to applicants due to similarities with other validation documents required for major planning applications.
- Three sections of the Fact-based Audit have been removed (Part 1 of the EES (page 2 - 3) and ES (page 2 - 4). These sections are Heritage and Site Layout, Accessibility and Movement, and Climate Change and Sustainability. This is because this data is already provided in other validation documents (Design and Access Statement, Heritage Statement, Transport Assessment, and Energy Statement).
- Questions relating to Neighbourhood and Community Plans have been added to the EES (page 2) and ES (page 2). This will ensure that applicants give due regard to existing and emerging plans.
- The 'You Said, We Did' section remains in ES (Part 4, page 6). This allows the applicant to set out what changes were made to the scheme as a result of engagement and consultation.

Amendments to Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment (Appendix 6)

- Changing the name of the document to an Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment, to reflect the Council's EINA template which includes

socio-economic considerations alongside protected characteristics. See page 4 – 11.

- Expanding the list of signposted evidence to include evidence related to different protected characteristic groups and providing examples of how socio-economic disadvantage may arise for each protected characteristic. See page 2.

What has been the response to the consultation so far?

Number of Responses as of 10.2.25: **6 responses**

The consultation period closes on 19th February. Following this, officers will consider the comments raised and propose any further amendments to the SCI and DCC, and Early Engagement Strategy (EES), Engagement Summary (ES). Proposed final changes will be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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