

# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Growth and Development

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Director of Growth & Development

**DATE:** Thursday, 9 July 2020

**PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED:** Growth and Development

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** (All Wards);

**KEY DECISION:** Y

## **SUBJECT:**

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets the policy for how Blackburn with Darwen Council's Planning Service will involve local residents, businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders in the plan making process and the determination of planning applications in the Borough. The Local Authority is legally bound to adhere to commitments set out in its SCI. The recent impacts of COVID-19 and restrictions imposed on business, social integration and travel mean that a review of the SCI is now necessary.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive Board:

1. Approves the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets the policy for how the Council consults with members of the public and stakeholders in its Planning Service. The revised SCI covers any temporary arrangements that may be necessary during COVID-19 restrictions.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

All local planning authorities are required to prepare a SCI under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning Act 2008, Localism Act 2011, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and is informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019.

The SCI demonstrates the ways that the Planning Service will engage with the community and businesses, in both the plan-making process and in decisions on planning applications. It also provides an explanation of the planning process and what happens if you decide to become involved in the process. Planning is integral to our neighbourhoods, and it's important that the local community and businesses become involved at an early stage and throughout the planning process to help inform how Blackburn with Darwen and the places within it might evolve and develop over time.

SCI's must be kept under review at least every five years. Blackburn with Darwen last adopted its SCI in May 2018. The impact of COVID-19 in terms of restrictions imposed by lockdown and social distancing measures has necessitated an earlier review than would otherwise be necessary. By

approving the revised SCI the Council can ensure that consultations in the future remain in accordance with the adopted SCI and therefore legally sound.

The key changes in principle between the adopted May 2018 SCI and this revised SCI are:

1. Confirmation of any potential temporary arrangements that may need to be implemented due to COVID-19 restrictions, the trigger points for commencement, and how this will be communicated; and
2. Inclusion of reference to the latest regulations, including any temporary regulations, to avoid the need for any future update until 2025

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

Ensuring that the Council has an up to date SCI in the era of COVID-19 means that the most up to date information on how the community and stakeholders can get involved in the planning system is reflected. The Council can ensure that it meets its legal obligations regardless of whether or not restrictions and social distancing measures are currently in place.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

By having an up to date revised SCI the Council ensures compliance with legal requirements. It also ensures that the community and stakeholders have the opportunity and knowledge of how to engage in the production of planning policy documents and to comment on planning applications early on in the process. The revised SCI identifies potential temporary arrangements for consultations and community involvement that may need to be put in place during periods of COVID-19 restriction. It sets out how the communication of the imposition of temporary arrangements will take place. It also provides more flexibility to accommodate any potential future changes to regulations to minimise the need for any further updates prior to the statutory five year review trigger point for SCIs.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

A SCI is required to be published by local planning authorities under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning Act 2008, Localism Act 2011, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and is informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019.

The Council is legally obliged to comply with its Statement of Community Involvement, once it is formally adopted.

#### **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Any resource implications of the SCI will be met within existing Growth Board budgets.

#### **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Please select one of the options below.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

The SCI is a statement of fact of how the Council will consult with members of the public and stakeholders in planning application decisions and on planning policy documents. As a result, it is not necessary to consult on the document.

The approved SCI will be made available on the Council's website.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	PMO Growth, Darren Tweed, , pmogrowth@blackburn.gov.uk, darren.tweed@blackburn.gov.uk
<b>DATE:</b>	01/06/20
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	SCI July 2020