

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**Background Report****1. Context**

- 1.1. The report is concerned with the adoption of a new Statement of Community Involvement relating to Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon, and which will therefore require separate adoption by the three councils.
- 1.2. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provides certainty for communities about the basis upon which the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) will engage with them in the future and to guide the LPAs to provide an excellent and professional process as they undertake their responsibilities. The primary aim is to ensure that consultation and engagement is meaningful and effective, resulting in better outcomes for everyone.
- 1.3. LPAs have a statutory duty to review and update their SCIs at least once every 5 years, a provision introduced in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. The current SCI was adopted in 2009 and it is therefore clearly time to review and update its content following the adoption of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.
- 1.4. The SCI has therefore been prepared as a joint document between Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council. It builds on the work of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, providing a consistent baseline to support the continued cooperation in planning across the three LPAs.
- 1.5. The SCI sets out the minimum requirements for consultation and involvement that must be followed by the LPAs of the Councils when preparing planning documents or consulting on planning applications. The document also sets out how the LPAs will support groups undertaking neighbourhood planning.
- 1.6. Consultation in Plymouth has been held up as exemplarity best practice for both the Plymouth Core Strategy (2007) and the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2019). The SCI seeks to maintain this level of success and take advantage of technology to further improve engagement.

2. Consultation on the SCI

- 2.1. The draft SCI was considered and approved for consultation by Cabinet on 8th October 2019. Agreement was also given by South Hams Executive on 31st October and West Devon Hub on 5th November, and consultation on the SCI commenced on 13th November, running until 6th January 2020.
- 2.2. A total of 14 comments were received on the draft SCI from 7 respondents - South West Water, Natural England, Inclusive Totnes, Highways England, Bovis Homes, Plymouth Civic Society and a member of the public. In response to these comments, the following amendments to the consultation draft SCI have been made:
 - Paragraph 1.13 has been amended to include a reference to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which set out a list of statutory

consultees for the purpose of the Duty to Cooperate. This change has been made in response to a comment from Highways England.

- The first sentence of paragraph 4.2 has been changed to read “All consultations on DPDs will comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 by achieving the following as a minimum:” to make clear that the process of producing a DPD will follow the steps set out in regulations. This change has been made in response to a comment made by Bovis Homes Plc.
- The table under paragraph 8.5 has been slightly amended to bring it into line with National Planning Policy Guidance on the publicity around planning applications, to clarify that where site notices are required, at least one notice will be used.
- The Councils have also taken the opportunity to make minor typographical and factual changes to the SCI before it is finalised.

2.3. The final adoption version of the SCI is therefore substantially unchanged from the version which was approved by Cabinet.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1. Following approval by Cabinet and Council, and the relevant executive, committee and Council decisions in South Hams and West Devon the SCI will be formally adopted by the three Councils.
- 3.2. Once adopted, the SCI will come into force and will be used to guide the consultations undertaken by the three Councils on a consistent basis.