

# **Fareham Borough Council**

## **Statement of Community Involvement: Statement of Consultation**

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January 2017

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is important that the Council engages with the community through the planning application process and also through the preparation of the Local Plan. In doing this we need to ensure that we follow the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.2 The Council's previous SCI dated from 2011. Many changes have occurred since this time in both planning regulations and also through the introduction of a more customer focused approach at the Council. The latter has been particularly influential in the process of determining planning applications. All of these key changes have been reflected in a new SCI which is intended to replace the 2011 version.
- 1.3 The new SCI draft was produced in Autumn 2016. On the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 the Planning and Development Policy Development and Review Panel approved that the draft SCI be made available for a six week period of consultation. This subsequently occurred from the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 until the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016.
- 1.4 This consultation statement sets out:-
  - a) Who was consulted, how and when?
  - b) Summary of responses and actions
  - c) Next steps

## 2. Who was consulted, how and when?

- 2.1 Consultation on the draft SCI took place for a six week period from Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November until Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016.
- 2.2 Specific correspondence (in either letter or email form) was sent out to a total of 1,267 individuals and organisations registered on the Council's Local Plan database to notify them of the consultation period. This included key statutory and non-statutory consultees as well as individual members of the public. The correspondence included a copy of the Council's Consultation Notice (included in Appendix A), an overview of what the SCI is, and details on the consultation period including how and where the document can be accessed or viewed.
- 2.3 Hard copies of the draft SCI were available at all libraries in the borough and the document was available to view electronically throughout the consultation period on the Council's website.
- 2.4 A press release was issued on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 (copy included in Appendix B) and a further user friendly online questionnaire was available on the Council's website, via social media and forwarded directly to those on the Council's E-Panel.

### 3. Summary of Responses and Actions

3.1 During the consultation period eight formal representations were received from: -

- Historic England
- Hampshire County Council (Estates and Development Services)
- Land and Partners Ltd.
- Environment Agency
- Southern Water
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Members of the Public (x2)

3.2 In addition to the formal responses there were 79 further respondents to the online questionnaire.

3.3 The online questionnaire showed that generally the results were positive with 96% considering the SCI to be clear on how and when they could get involved in planning consultations. A small proportion of respondents found some areas of the document to be complex and/or felt that it was overly long. A summary of the results from the online questionnaire has been provided in Appendix C.

3.4 Table 1 below provides a summary of key comments that arose through the formal consultation and from the conclusions of the online questionnaire. A Council response on each matter is also provided where appropriate.

<b>Comment Received (summary)</b>	<b>Response</b>
Reference to Historic England welcomed (Historic England)	No action required
Suggested amendment to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet of box 3 (pg7) to include 'and specific consultation bodies will be notified in writing' (Southern Water)	Noted. An additional bullet point will be added to include 'specific consultation bodies will be notified'.
Request that Page 11 paragraph 10.3 includes reference to 'consultation bodies' that should be consulted as a requirement of Regulation 14(b) (Southern Water)	The existing wording of paragraph 10.3 refers to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and how these regulations detail the requirements for publicity and consultation in relation to neighbourhood plans. There is therefore no need to mention specific individual requirements from these regulations within the main body of the SCI text. No action.
Suggestion that paragraph 11.3 is widened from 'other interested parties' to include 'relevant service providers' (Southern Water)	Noted and amendments will be made to address this point.
The inclusion of 'utility providers operating in the area' in Appendix B is welcomed (Southern Water)	No action required
Document is clear and successfully lays out how everyone can be involved in the planning process (Environment Agency)	No action required
There should be more explicit mention that pre-application discussion with relevant stakeholders is also key (Environment Agency).	Noted and amendment will be implemented to more explicitly mention this point.
Appendix D should clarify what constitutes a 'large scale major application'. In HCC Property Services Experience, above 50 units would be considered 'large scale major' development (HCC Property Services)	Providing a numerical bar is unlikely to reflect those schemes that are 'likely to generate wide community interest'. The Planning Service are happy to discuss with individual developers the most appropriate community

	engagement approach depending upon the scheme/location.
Paragraph 11.2 appears to suggest that an application will not be validated without community consultation and this goes beyond the national requirement (i.e. paragraph 1.89 [189] of the NPPF where it states LPAs cannot require a developer to engage with them prior to submitting an application). There is a corresponding requirement for a Statement of Community Involvement to accompany an application in the Local List [Local Information Requirements] for planning applications. The representation seeks clarification from the council on the legal status of this which overrides [contradicts with] the NPPF (Land and Partners Ltd.)	<p>The SCI does not require a developer to engage in the pre-application services provided by the Council. Further clarity through the choice or wording in Appendix D will be provided through the use of the word 'encourage' rather than 'expect'. What the SCI does indicate is an expectation that applicants or developers will consult with the local community before submitting major planning applications. This expectation (and corresponding requirement in the Local Information Requirements) is not considered contrary to the NPPF.</p> <p>The SCI indicates that without such a statement the application is 'likely' to be treated as invalid and Appendix D also indicates the levels of consultation that will 'normally' be expected. It is therefore not overly prescriptive which allows the Council to take a pragmatic approach on the content and extent of consultation taking into account the likely wider community interest and this will, where necessary, involve dialogue with the applicant or developer.</p> <p>This requirement in the Local Information Requirements has been operating since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and the Development Management team have had no specific concerns raised by developers. The majority of developers see this type of approach as best practice and useful in informing their planning proposals.</p>
More door to door canvassing is required to improve residents input to various planning proposals, possibly by Councillors (online questionnaire response)	Such an approach would have limited effectiveness as it would depend on persons being at home when canvassing took place.
Selective sampling of residents affected by a planning proposal could encourage feedback (online questionnaire response)	Selective sampling may lead to criticism from those who are 'missed' from the selective approach. A large array of comments from individuals can come forward for any scheme and therefore the existing arrangement to publicise and welcome comments from anyone who wishes to make them is deemed more appropriate. No action
Query as to whether more staff will be taken on to facilitate this and how involved the community can really be when some/many decisions have already been made? (online questionnaire response)	<p>Facilitating the SCI will be incorporated within the existing staffing levels of the Planning Service.</p> <p>Any formal decisions already made on planning matters will only involve further community involvement should significant revisions be made or new applications submitted. No action.</p>
Although the document was generally well received there were some comments that the length of the document was too long (Online questionnaire findings)	Although an Executive Summary would normally assist, the nature of this document is such that it is difficult to summarise beyond explaining what an SCI is and what it does. This is already explained in Section 1 of the document and the subsequent sections are well labelled to allow people to focus on those areas that are relevant.

**Table 1: Summary of Comments Received and Response**

3.5 Table 2 below provides an overview of the changes to the draft document arising from

analysis of the consultation responses.

Paragraph/Section	Change following draft version
Page 4 (Pre-application consultation bullet point)	Insert additional sentence on end of existing bullet text to read 'Early pre-application engagement with any relevant stakeholders will also be beneficial'
Page 7 (box 3 of diagram)	Insert additional bullet point to read 'specific consultation bodies will be notified'
Page 12 (Paragraph 11.2)*	Insert the word 'major' ahead of three individual references to 'planning application' or 'planning applications'
Page 12 (Paragraph 11.3)	Amendment to first sentence as follows. When the Council receives a planning application, it will let neighbours, <del>and</del> other interested parties <b>and relevant service providers</b> know that the application has been submitted.
Appendix D (first paragraph)	Alterations to first sentence to read 'The Council encourages applicants to carry out pre-application discussions. On major planning proposals the Council expects early community engagement to be undertaken by the applicant, appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposed development, and that evidence of this is provided with the application.'
Appendix D (second paragraph)*	Capitalise 'requirement' on first sentence

**Table 2: Changes to the draft SCI following consultation**

\*Officer noted amendments for clarity or typological correction.

## 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The amendments and/or additions outlined in Table 2 have been incorporated into the draft document to form the final version of the SCI. The final version of the SCI will then be taken before the Council's Executive to seek approval.
- 4.2 If/once approved the revised 2017 SCI will supersede the Council's previous SCI on the day following Executive approval.



## Appendix A – Consultation Notice

# FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CONSULTATION NOTICE

### Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2016

Fareham Borough Council is consulting on its Draft Statement of Community Involvement between **09:00 hours on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November and 12:00 hours on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016.**

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a document setting out standards that the Council will use to achieve meaningful consultation through engaging, informing and involving the community, consultees, stakeholders and other interested parties in (a) the preparation of the new Fareham Local Plan and (b) the consideration of planning applications.

Documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Planning Pages of the Council's website <http://www.fareham.gov.uk/planning>. Representations can be made:

- By emailing [planning.policy@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@fareham.gov.uk) (please include your name and postal address);
- By writing to: Planning Policy Team  
Fareham Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Civic Way  
Fareham  
Hampshire  
PO16 7AZ

Copies will also be available to view at all libraries in Fareham borough. For details of library opening days and times please visit Hampshire County Council's website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/library> or telephone 0300 555 1387.

In order for representations to be formally considered please include your name and postal address.

Should you have any queries relating to the consultation then you can contact the Planning Policy team directly on the email address above or by telephone on 01329 824601.

**Please submit representations by 12:00 hours on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016.**

## Appendix B – Press Release

### **Press Release**

**21 November 2016**

#### **Have we got our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) right?**

Fareham Borough Council has produced a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and would like to know what people think of it by Friday 23 December.

The SCI sets out how everyone can get involved in developing and deciding on the local planning policies and planning applications that help shape Fareham. The SCI also outlines the types of consultation and engagement methods we will use to involve people and groups in the decision making process.

You can view and comment on the Statement of Community Involvement online at [www.fareham.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/consultations). Paper copies will also be available to view at Fareham Borough Council's Civic Offices and in all libraries in Fareham borough. Comments can also be sent to [planningpolicy@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@fareham.gov.uk) or by post to Planning Policy Team, Fareham Borough Council, Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham, PO16 7AZ.

Councillor Keith Evans, Executive Member for Planning and Development, said "The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the standards that the Council will use to give everyone an equal opportunity to influence and comment on the Local Plan and planning applications shaping the future development in Fareham. We welcome any interested parties to comment by Friday 23 December."

ENDS

# Appendix C – Summary of Results from Online Questionnaire

## Summary Results – Have we got our Statement of Community Involvement right?

### Introduction

The consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) ran between 14 and 23 December 2016. The online questionnaire was promoted on the Council website, by press release, via social media channels and the E-panel.

### No. of Respondents

79 Respondents completed the online questionnaire.

### Results

The results were generally positive:

- 96% of respondents thought the SCI was clear how and when they could get involved in planning consultations.
- Only five people noted parts of the document that they didn't understand, please see the Appendix for details.

### Emerging Themes on Engagement

Respondents were also asked about ways that the Council could improve the way it engages on planning matters. The main suggestions and the Council's response are included below.

Suggestion	Council Response
Via Facebook and Twitter	The Council already uses both Facebook and Twitter for consultations.
Through regular updates in Fareham Today or other printed medium specifically for planning	Fareham Today has been used to promote planning matters e.g. the 2015 special edition 'Where next for Housing in Fareham?'. The magazine will shortly move to more regular online editions, which could allow more space to be given to planning issues.
Making a noticeboard of Council developments and projects more visible in Fareham	The Council has 43 noticeboards across the Borough. Planning consultations and major applications are advertised on the boards.

Using Email alerts	Planning consultations and major applications are advertised on both the E-Panel (made up of over 2,200 residents who receive regular emails) and the Planning Database.
By improving Council Website e.g. use web pages in plain English rather than complicated planning words, have a progress update page	We are working to improve the planning pages and ensure that the information is clear and easy to understand. This work is ongoing.
Displays in Shopping centre and supermarkets	<p>Council Connect is an electronic display point in Fareham Shopping Centre, which is used to promote planning applications and consultations.</p> <p>Officers are exploring other options for promoting Council consultations and events in places such as supermarkets.</p>
Asking local societies to spread the word	Our Community Contacts database has the details of local community groups and charities. Relevant groups are contacted regarding particular consultations. Officers look to update the database on a regular basis.

Please see the Appendix for the full list of suggestions.

**General Comments**

Some general themes which emerged in other comments about the SCI were:-

- CAT Meetings – keep them going, more valuable if chaired by an independent chairperson.
- Too long, technical executive summary of main points would be useful.
- Document doesn't provide insight to the process of designing consultations to ensure best practice.
- Clear well written, good deal of work gone into it.

Please see the Appendix for the full list of comments

**Conclusion**

The draft SCI was generally well received. However, there were some comments regarding the length of the document. With this in mind, it would be worthwhile to include an executive summary. This would aid readability and understanding of the SCI.

## Appendix

### Is it clear in the SCI how and when you can get involved in planning related consultations?

Yes (75) 96%

No (3) 4%

#### If no, why not?

- The document is very long and complicated
- short concise summary, on email, that can lead into other areas of interests via links.
- I was under the impression that any objections to planning applications would be acknowledged. We have not received any acknowledgement to our objections to the revised Newlands Farm plan submitted by HLM. Nor can I find any updates to the position of the application, which I thought would have progressed one way or another by late 2016. Nothing in "Fareham Today" since the last relevant CAT.

### Can you think of any other ways we could be consulting and engaging with you that are not in the SCI?

- There is not always updated information on current planning applications in Fareham Today - what is happening with the Newlands Farm application - no comment for some time. Please ensure regular updates in Fareham Today, even if nothing to report.
- Have a noticeboard of council developments and projects more visible in Fareham.
- Email would be helpful - subscribe to an area or something for notifications
- Web pages and documents in plain English rather than complicated planning words
- mail is good, but generally too much information is off putting. Keep to short bullet points in summary format, with links to extended info for those who wish to look at more info. Use more graphical information such as maps
- Facebook and Twitter
- Facebook and twitter
- I think the methods of engagement are good. I do however, feel the quality of that engagement can be improved.
- It would be really helpful for a leaflet or letter to be sent to all addresses in the community explaining the SCI. I am aware only because I have received your email and I am computer literate but I know of a number of my neighbours and friends that are not and they are definitely not aware of this or even have any knowledge that it exists.
- Ongoing information to be sent re planning decisions
- A clear phone number on your website where people can phone in with questions or comments. It's not obvious if this is possible? Use Streetlife, which a number of people are signed up to.
- We could do with a progress update page on the council web site where the current status of each significant project that is proposed can summarised. For example, we have attended meetings concerning the possible Newlands Farm development

but don't know the up to date status. We have seen exhibits about the Stubbington bypass but don't know the status today. It would be a place to state the likely completion dates of the various ongoing road improvements too.

- I think that the Council have pretty much covered all the bases. At some point the local people must take responsibility for finding out what is happening within their community so long as that information is easily accessible.
- No.....it seems to work well
- A regular printed publication which would obviously cost money from an already limited budget, but in my opinion would be a good use of funding.
- No, very comprehensive.
- Perhaps publicise the SCI in displays in the shopping centre and communal areas outside to raise awareness of it- if you can raise awareness to those currently unaware that it exists might increase feedback and interest
- Using social media is a cost-effective way of engaging residents and should therefore be used for large housing schemes as well.
- Twitter?
- Local societies, such as the Portchester Society and the Civic Society have a membership that is captive and probably not aware of much council work. What about officially asking them to spread the word?
- Very reasonably covered in my opinion
- Other than going through the web there is no 'visual' record the 'latest' planning applications received.
- In the past planning application would be published in the local papers but that approach now seems to have been lost. The problem is that unless I am adjacent to the site and miss the yellow street notices I am unlikely to know that a planning application has been made even though it may be very close to my property. It would help if the Council could make it easier to find new planning applications. Perhaps the Council's web site could be improved to make it easier to find new planning applications. New planning applications could also be displayed on local notice boards and in public buildings or even supermarkets which we probably visit more than public buildings. I appreciate that the e-panel proposal may address the above but unless you are on the panel the point remains unresolved.
- No, it seems very comprehensive.

**Is there anything that you don't understand in the SCI? (please give the paragraph numbers if you can)**

- No, but I didn't read all of it, because I lost interest
- Most of the document is far too complicated
- 10.3 what constitutes a duty in practical terms?
- 7.1 'Other spatial plans or statements e.g. PUSH Spatial Position Statement' What PUSH is is not made clear until further in the document and I can imagine that this would frustrate some people.
- I don't understand the relationship to PUSH and the new planned devolved area of Hampshire shortly to be rolled out?
- Yes, the involvement of PUSH has been mentioned but it is now clear how local people can influence the decision of this board. From a distance it looks like PUSH is now accountable to local people even though it has control of huge amounts of funding.
- No, although I didn't read every single page of the entire document due to its length.

**Do you have any other comments about the SCI?**

- CAT Team Meetings are usually chaired by the executive leader of the council who

effectively controls the agenda and debate. These meetings should have an independent chairperson if any genuine consultation is to take place at these meetings.

- Well written document. Good use of graphics.
- No it seems to comprehensively cover the subject matter
- I think that The CAT meetings are still by far the most valuable way of getting public response to new proposals, so I hope you keep these going
- I don't understand how, with all the consultations that took place, the vast majority of the Public were simply ignored when it came to Welbourne.
- It is too long and technical. The document needs to be short and in plain English to encourage people to read it and provide feedback.
- It seems clear and well-written.
- good visibility, clear guidance and well thought through
- Seems to give all round helpful approach
- A road near my house, in the last year-and-a-half, had three separate planning applications approved for more than twenty houses on sites where only three houses stood before. While the developers had adhered to the SCI, it seems unjust to me that in each instance it was only necessary that the developer consulted with the immediate neighbours to the site. Overall, I am pro-development. But I am also pro-community engagement. This is one example that will have a significant impact on the area - introducing 17 more families - but also set precedent for future developments in the area.
- Locks Heath does not have a great deal of land readily available for development and so this type of in-fill and increase in density will be common place. Residents should be able to see more transparent engagement in these instances also.
- It's good as long as this is carried out.
- I have engaged with a number of e-panel consultations in the last years. In many cases I feel they could be better designed as they often seem to be asking leading questions which could re-enforce existing policy decisions and political agenda's. They often fail to ask directly about the concerns I want to raise such that I need to use the comment fields. This document does not provide any insight to the process of designing the consultations to ensure it uses best research practices and the over-sight mechanisms to ensure it is balanced.
- This is very useful to note especially Appendix E: Neighbourhood Plans are a way of local residents being able to make their views known and for them to be taken into consideration. However, I am extremely concerned that the Strawberry Fields development which was granted before I moved into the area in 2012 from Birmingham has large blocks of flats very close to the bungalow properties on Brook Lane which are extremely intrusive and one block in particular must have looked good on the plans but stands out as an eyesore and can be very easily seen from Brook Lane/Barnes Lane, it is very noticeable and not in keeping with the area at all. I am aware that the residents of the bungalows whose gardens backed onto the development did object very strongly to the large development and particularly with regard to blocks of flats being at the bottom of their gardens but they have still been built despite strong objections. It would have been much more in keeping with the area if low rise ho
- Give an Executive Summary of the main points. It's very long. Who do you plan to share this with, and how?
- It seems comprehensive and well produced.
- Could appendix C be spread over two pages in order that a larger type point could be used to make it easier to read.
- It works well.
- very detailed and clear
- Although para 5.1f refers to small exhibitions in the Fareham Shopping Centre, I

cannot recall seeing any such events. A good initiative but please make any such events stand out. Para 5.1h refers to phone surveys by third parties; I trust that any such party respects the Telephone Preference Service database and does not add to the number of nuisance calls received by people.

- It seems very comprehensive
- I have two comments only. Page 6 item G, refers to CAT meetings as being typically a one topic only meeting? I understood these were broader meetings including E.G. Hants Police updates and other items as appropriate. My experience of these has been as such, and I feel they should be regarded as a broad direct communication vehicle for the whole of FBC, and not just the planning department?
- Page 12, paragraph 11.2 a typo. " ..... the Council may decide to not to accept the application until it has been done." should read as "..... the Council may decide to not accept the application until it has been done."
- Excellent document, albeit a little long.
- As above why not have displays in the town centre to update in some of the key decisions taken or major developments in the town eg what is the latest on welborne, the roadworks on A27 etc
- Consultations are all well and good, but it is acting on what the public wish the council are lacking in
- Very unconvinced about Neighbourhood Plans having any impact, especially bearing in mind they specifically can NOT block developments. Rather unlikely to get residents involved, if no real impact.
- Some planned projects i.e the new electricity cable from France near Solent Breezes that will impact the environment does not seem to be in the remit of Fareham Council
- The document is clear and reasonably understandable considering the difficulties within the material.
- I do feel a good deal of work has gone into it.
- In Para 11.5 it states that "..... comments and views are welcomed. ...." I cannot find any reference to public comments on Planning Applications having any relevance either to the Officers OR the Planning Committee. Where "comments and views" are given, and the vast majority of respondents are in favour of an application, why do a VERY small minority have an disproportionate say on the decision reached?
- 1. It is interesting to know of its existence. 2. However, being extremely pedantic, the one thing I did spot was a series of very minor typos. Forgive me if this is too insignificant to mention, but I will do anyway in case anyone feels it's worth correcting them: - In 2.1, there seems to be inconsistent punctuation at the end of bullet-points (some are semi-colons, some are full-stops). - In 6.1, 'The Council' is used as if it's plural, whereas it's singular everywhere else - so I think it should read "The Council keeps and maintains ..." - In 9.0 and in Appendix A and in the Glossary, the word Co-operate in 'Duty to Co-operate' is inconsistently hyphenated - sometimes with a hyphen and sometimes without. Personally, I would opt for using the hyphen! Apologies for being so pedantic!