

Report of:	Head of Planning & Regeneration
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Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 20/03/14

CABINET
20 MARCH 2014
CANNOCK CHASE LOCAL PLAN
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To adopt an updated Statement of Community Involvement setting standards for public consultation in plan making and determination of planning applications

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopts the Statement of Community Involvement attached as appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Cabinet adopts the supporting user guide attached as appendix 2.
- 2.3 That authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Leader for Economic Development and Planning to make any non-substantive changes considered necessary to the documents.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires the Council to produce a 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) that sets out how the Council intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of plans and decision making for planning applications. The current SCI was adopted by Cabinet in June 2006 under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. At that time the SCI was identified as a development plan document in the same way as the Local Plan and therefore subject to independent examination

- 3.2 Amendments to the regulations in 2008 no longer identified the SCI as a development plan document thereby removing a requirement for independent examination. It is now possible therefore to update an SCI more easily. Whilst the process for producing an updated SCI is no longer set out by regulation it is considered good practice to hold a period of public consultation (6 weeks) on a draft SCI update prior to consideration of representations and subsequent adoption by Cabinet.
- 3.3 A report was presented to Cabinet on 17 January 2013 where a six week period of public consultation was agreed for an updated draft Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation period ran concurrently with the period for the Local Plan Publication document between 14 February and 28 March 2013. No representations were received. The version of the SCI now presented for adoption has been simplified from the draft version issued for consultation and aims to present the specific steps that the Council will take to achieve community involvement with greater clarity.
- 3.4 The SCI does not propose new planning policy or identify new development sites, but primarily considers how best to involve different sectors of the community in plan preparation and in determining planning applications. The SCI has been updated to reflect the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012.
- 3.5 The SCI sets out how all sections of the community, from individual members of the public through to representative organisations, have better opportunities to participate in planning in the District. It deals with community involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and in the determination of planning applications as well as community involvement in recently introduced planning procedures such as the community infrastructure levy (CIL) and neighbourhood planning. The Council's vision for the SCI is that:
- “Everyone is given the opportunity to influence the future planning of Cannock Chase District and consequently take ownership of the Local Plan through stakeholder and community involvement.”**
- 3.6 There are a number of important benefits of achieving community and stakeholder buy-in, these include:
- Community commitment to the future development of an area;
 - Promoting regeneration and investment, creating certainty and commitment to change;
 - Providing a strong basis for successful negotiations on development proposals, including developer contributions; and
 - Providing a robust basis for addressing difficult decisions – it is important that in seeking to build consensus addressing controversial issues is not avoided.

- 3.7 The constituent parts of the SCI are described in the report detail. An easy to read user guide has also been prepared and is attached at appendix 2.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The SCI will help facilitate public consultation on all aspects of the Council's priorities which have development implications. The SCI reflects the Council's recent communications strategy work.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 **General Standards of Consultation** - The SCI sets out general standards of consultation that will be adhered to at all stages of plan making where consultation is undertaken. These will be applied to Local Plans, SPD and CIL charging schedules (see section 8) and are:
- Place relevant documents on the Council website together with any supporting information needed to enable people to understand what they are being asked to comment on and state where and when documentation can be inspected;
 - Make available all relevant material for inspection at the Council Civic Centre in Cannock for the period during which comments are being sought. Additionally the Council's Rugeley area office and libraries within the District will be used where appropriate;
 - Contact specific, general and other consultees who may have an interest in the document and invite to make representations, advising where and when the relevant material can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, the closing date for representations and where to send any representations;
 - Issue adverts and/or press releases to local newspapers circulating in the area as appropriate advising where and when the relevant material can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, the closing date for representations and where to send any representations;
 - Make available summary documents and/or leaflets as appropriate;
 - Provide appropriate advice and information to the public as requested;
 - Produce a report summarising consultation methods, representations made and Council responses (whether requiring a change to the plan or not) and make available on the Council's website before proceeding with a subsequent version of the plan and/or further consultation.
- 5.2 **Local Plan** - The Local Plan provides the key local statutory planning policy framework for the District. Effective community and stakeholder involvement in its preparation is therefore very important. In applying the general standards of consultation set out above, the Council will ensure consultation and engagement is also in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the 2012

Regulations. In addition for each specific stage of Local Plan making additional standards will apply to reflect relevant regulations. These are detailed in the SCI.

- 5.3 **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** – SPDs are produced to support and elaborate the policies contained in the Local Plan. They provide additional information and policy guidance to support the implementation of a policy. The procedures for SPD preparation and therefore the consultation requirements are slightly more straightforward than for the Local Plan and are again outlined in the SCI.
- 5.4 **Duty to Co-operate** - The SCI commits the Council to producing a Statement of Compliance with the ‘Duty to Co-operate’ which will set out how the District Council has cooperated with other bodies in the production of a Local Plan. This will include a listing of the organisations involved, a record of meetings and other consultation, a summary of the issues and details of the outcome achieved. In addition, the Council will include consultation with other bodies, beyond the prescribed list, where this is of relevance.
- 5.5 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – The CIL is a recently introduced planning charge, the legislation for which came into force in April 2010. The levy allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise contributions from developers to help pay for infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. Local authorities who wish to charge the levy must produce a Draft Charging Schedule setting out CIL rates for their areas to be levied on the gross internal floorspace of the net additional liable development. Before it is adopted by the Council, the Draft Schedule has to be approved by an independent examiner. Cannock Chase Council has resolved to produce a CIL and the SCI therefore sets out the consultation measures that will apply to each consultation step required for producing a CIL charging schedule or review.
- 5.6 **Neighbourhood Planning** - Recently introduced mechanisms for Neighbourhood Planning – Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build – are also considered in the SCI. The Planning Policy pages, on the Council website will be used to provide further information.
- 5.7 The SCI clearly states that the Council will not produce a Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of a local community but will give assistance and advice in the plan preparation process. The Council, as the local planning authority, will, if requested, administer the formal designation of Neighbourhood Area(s) to be covered by Neighbourhood Plan(s) and where relevant the Council will formally approve a Neighbourhood Forum.
- 5.8 The Council will check a draft Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it meets all the relevant legislation and regulations and that it generally conforms to the strategic elements of the Local Plan. Subject to the above, the Council will arrange for an independent examination of a Neighbourhood Plan. If the plan passes an examination, the Council, as local planning authority, will arrange a local referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan and if the referendum supports the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council will adopt it as part of the overall development plan (which includes the Local Plan).

- 5.9 **Development Management** - The SCI sets out the categories of planning applications and the forms of notification that apply whether by newspaper advertisement, site notice or by letter as well as describing the other ways in which copies of planning applications can be viewed and commented upon.
- 5.10 The decision making process for planning applications is set out in the SCI, including the forms of consultation that take place via pre application advice and via statutory and non-statutory consultations. Should an application be unsuccessful, the procedures for appeal are also outlined.
- 5.11 Finally the resource implications of effective community involvement are considered together with the management and monitoring of processes.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no financial implications in the report.

6.2 Legal

The legal implications are set out in the report.

6.3 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications in the report.

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

There are no direct Crime Prevention implications in the report.

6.5 Human Rights Act

No Human Rights Act implications.

6.6 Data Protection

None identified

6.7 Risk Management

None identified

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The SCI will help ensure the opportunity is given to all sectors of society to participate in local planning processes

6.9 Best Value

None identified

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1	Statement of Community Involvement 2014
Appendix 2	SCI User Guide

Previous Consideration

Background Papers

Cannock Chase Statement of Community Involvement

2014

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is produced by the Planning Policy Unit of Planning Services at Cannock Chase Council. To order further copies or for information:

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This document can be provided in Braille, on audio cassette tape/disk, **large print** and in the following languages on request to Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621.

Bengali, Gujarati, Chinese, Urdu, Punjabi and Polish.

আপনি অনুরোধ জানালে এই কাগজপত্রগুলোর বাংলা অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করা যেতে পারে।

如有要求的話我們可將此文件翻譯成中文

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Ten dokument jest dostępny na żądanie w twoim języku

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1. Introduction

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires the Council to produce a 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) that sets out how the Council intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of plans and decision making for planning applications. Communities are involved through a process that;

- Is transparent and accessible – where information is readily available in a form that is easily understood and accessible, where the more traditionally hard to reach groups are fully engaged;
- Promotes participation and involvement – with clear opportunities for people to participate and make their views known, with the decision-makers clearly identified.

This document is a revised and updated version of the Council's SCI adopted in 2006. The SCI does not propose new planning policy or identify new development sites, but primarily considers how best to involve different sectors of the community in plan preparation and in determining planning applications. This document has been updated to reflect the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012.

2. The Overall Approach to Community Involvement

The SCI sets out how all sections of the community, from individual members of the public through to representative organisations, have a range of better opportunities to participate in planning in the District. It deals with community involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and in the determination of planning applications as well as community involvement in recently introduced planning procedures such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and neighbourhood planning.

The aim has been to make the planning system more accessible to a wider range of people than in the past. It is hoped that this will lead to communities being better informed about how and when they are able to take part in the planning system, leading to greater participation and a more efficient and inclusive decision making process. Clearly, the scale of community involvement in the planning system has to reflect the resources the Council has available. To ensure the most efficient use of resources the approaches used have sought to make use of existing established networks wherever possible.

For community involvement to be successful, an inclusive approach is required that recognises the varied needs of different sectors of the community and the fact that some groups are better equipped to participate than others. Therefore, the Council seeks to apply the most effective way of enabling people to contribute throughout the process. This statement sets out how all sections of the community have the opportunity to participate in the better planning of the District through an approach which has taken into account its character and communities.

Involving all sectors of the community in plan making and decision making has benefits for the Council through increased awareness of planning issues. It can also help to generate a feeling of inclusion by the community in policy formulation. People living and working in the District can contribute their knowledge and understanding of the locality, its past and its distinctive and valuable features which might otherwise be overlooked. Stakeholders also have a key role to play in providing expertise in specialist areas that the Local Plan team may not have.

It is the role of the SCI to set the framework to allow the community of Cannock Chase to take an active part in planning its future. The Council's vision for the SCI is that:

“Everyone is given the opportunity to influence the future planning of Cannock Chase District and consequently take ownership of the Local Plan through stakeholder and community involvement.”

3. The Local Community

Understanding the characteristics of the District can help to identify any groups of residents who may have particular needs and therefore may be 'hard to reach'. This information will assist the Council when involving local people in the planning process.

The District has a growing population (93,800 in 2006 predicted to grow to 101,000 in 2028). The District's older population aged over 65 (and over 80) is expected to increase substantially and above the national trend, whilst the younger population (0-15 years) and working age population (16-64 years) will continue to decline. The proportion of ethnic minority people is only 4% (of these, 1% is from the Indian Sub-Continent).

Work undertaken for the first SCI identified the following groups of people as being potentially 'hard to reach':

- the elderly,
- young people,
- people with learning difficulties,
- the blind,
- the deaf,
- ethnic minority groups, which are relatively small,
- the disabled and those who have long term limiting illnesses.

These groups may be found concentrated in certain areas within local communities, particularly in the more deprived areas within the District.

Appropriate and more intensive methods of communication will be required to ensure that 'hard to reach' groups are involved in planning processes.

Recent experience in progressing the new Local Plan for the District has indicated that the elderly and young people are potentially less hard to reach than some of the other groups by using methods of engagement such as workshops in school or appropriate community events. Other groups remained harder to target and Chase CVS has proved a useful organisation for facilitating contacts, including making contacts with resident 'champions' in more deprived areas, such as the Blake area of Hednesford.

4. Involving the Community – General Approach

Community Involvement is about communicating information to people and gaining information from people in a collaborative process. The aim is to enable people of all abilities, colour, race, sex, religion, sexuality or age to access information which allows them to become involved collaboratively in planning the future of the District. The Council will be seeking to facilitate the involvement of the wider community through the approach outlined in this Statement. This is a critical element of the concept of “Localism” which now underpins the planning system.

There are a number of important benefits of achieving community and stakeholder involvement and subsequent buy-in, these include:

- Community commitment to the future development of an area;
- Promoting regeneration and investment, creating certainty and commitment to change;
- Providing a strong basis for successful negotiations on development proposals, including developer contributions; and
- Providing a robust basis for addressing difficult decisions – it is important that in seeking to build consensus addressing controversial issues is not avoided.

By involving the community in its widest sense it is possible to identify more clearly local priorities and needs. In addition, through local knowledge or personal understanding of the issues, solutions can often be identified more easily. Without the close involvement of the community there will be no ownership of the Local Plan and hence delivery will be much more difficult.

Those who may have a role or an interest in shaping the planning of the area, including local people, local organisations, local community groups, landowners and developers, regional organisations, national organisations and Government agencies should actively engage in the processes for plan making and determining planning applications. The level of engagement will vary depending on the nature of the plan or proposal.

The key to successful community involvement is engaging right across the community regardless of age, gender, religious values etc. It is important therefore that a range of different techniques for engagement are developed that will need to take into account the different requirements of the different sectors of the community.

For the 2006 SCI the Council used a Citizens Panel and applied the principles of a toolkit derived from- *DETR Guidance on enhancing public participation and an Audit Commission publication - 'Listen-up! Effective Community Consultation'*. This toolkit remains relevant pending an update. The roles played by particular groups and sectors throughout the community involvement process are considered below.

Council Members. Councillors are kept up to date with relevant information and Councillors in turn keep constituents in their wards informed of progress on the Local Plan and on any key planning application issues for their area. Policy development is considered by an Economic Development and Planning Policy Development Committee and planning applications are decided in a Planning Control Committee unless delegated to Council officers.

Parish/Town Councils. As community representatives at the grass roots, Parish and Town Councils both within and adjoining the District will have the opportunity to be frequently involved in all aspects of relevant planning, by being consulted on planning applications and planning policy documents.

The Chase Community Partnership. The partnership brings together all the key stakeholders in the District and is used to help identify links between the Local Plan and other plans and strategies of partner organisations, providing the opportunity to ensure that these plans are appropriately reflected in the Local Plan.

Local People. The Council wishes to ensure that no one is excluded from the planning process and will therefore seek to make use of the groups/networks that already exist in parts of the District, such as resident or special interest groups. In addition the Council will pass information on relevant issues to the established community groups and attend meetings when requested, wherever practicable.

Neighbouring Authorities and Communities. Development proposals not only affect communities within a local authority's boundaries, but can directly or indirectly affect neighbouring communities. The Council will ensure that neighbouring local authorities, Parish Councils, and residents within adjoining local authorities areas are given the opportunity where appropriate to be involved in the planning process in Cannock Chase District. The importance of cross boundary co-operation has been recognised by the introduction of a "Duty to Co-operate."

Local Organisations. The Council understands that many local, regional and national organisations have to deal with a significant amount of information being forwarded to them for comment. Existing networks/stakeholder groups will be utilised wherever possible and the Council will maintain its database of organisations to ensure that they are all made fully aware of key stages of consultation.

Agents/Developers. This group includes landowners and those with potential development interests. Many of these are already involved in planning applications, are aware of the Local Plan and are likely to maintain their involvement. Within the area, there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise that will contribute to the delivery of the Local Plan and SPDs.

Business Groups. A number of existing business networks are already established within the District and officers will utilise these groups, working closely with officers in economic development, to generate a two way flow of information. The creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's) has provided an increased opportunity for engagement with the business community.

Hard to Reach groups. The sectors of the local community who may be harder to reach, were identified in section 3 and particular effort will be made to ensure that they are not excluded from planning processes.

5. Involving the Community - Plan Making

General Standards of Public Consultation

The following general standards will be adhered to at all stages of plan making where consultation is undertaken. These will be applied to Local Plans, SPD and CIL charging schedules (see section 8)

- Place relevant documents on the Council website together with any supporting information needed to enable people to understand what they are being asked to comment on and state where and when documentation can be inspected;
- Make available all relevant material for inspection at the Council Civic Centre in Cannock for the period during which comments are being sought. Additionally the Council's Rugeley area office and libraries within the District will be used where appropriate;
- Contact specific, general and other consultees who may have an interest in the document and invite to make representations, advising where and when the relevant material can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, the closing date for representations and where to send any representations;
- Issue adverts and/or press releases to local newspapers circulating in the area as appropriate advising where and when the relevant material can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, the closing date for representations and where to send any representations;
- Make available summary documents and/or leaflets as appropriate;
- Provide appropriate advice and information to the public as requested;
- Produce a report summarising consultation methods, representations made and Council responses (whether requiring a change to the plan or not) and make available on the Council's website before proceeding with a subsequent version of the plan and/or further consultation.

The Local Plan

The Local Plan provides the key local statutory planning policy framework for the District. Effective community and stakeholder involvement in its preparation is therefore very important. In applying the general standards of consultation set out above, the Council will ensure consultation and engagement is also in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the 2012 Regulations. In addition for each specific stage of Local Plan making the following additional standards will apply:

Consideration of issues and assessment of options

- Discuss issues and options with partners and in existing forums/groups, as appropriate.
- Arrange events and/or workshops to discuss issues and proposals, as appropriate. Place emphasis on understanding community views at early stage of plan making and explore and resolve conflicts as far as possible.
- Take exhibition material to venues around the District and produce easy to read (plain English) summary materials.
- Organise 'face-to-face' discussions if requested and appropriate.

Preparation of Draft Local Plan

- Seek consensus in emerging planning policy position via discussion with partners and in existing forums/groups and in events and/or workshops.
- Take exhibition material to venues around the District and produce easy to read (plain English) summary materials.
- Organise 'face-to-face' discussions if requested and appropriate.

Publication of Local Plan

- Send a statement of the representations procedure and a statement of the fact that the proposed submission documents are available for inspection and the times at which they can be inspected to all of the consultees that were invited to comment in earlier plan making stages.
- Publish for a minimum six weeks consultation period.
- Seek views on whether the document is legally compliant and sound.
- Discuss outstanding issues with partners and existing forums/groups.
- Organise 'face-to-face' discussions if requested and appropriate.

Submission of Local Plan

- Submit the document and relevant supporting information to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- Notify specific and general consultation bodies that the documents are available for inspection at the above locations.
- Notify others who have requested to be informed when the document is submitted.

Examination of Local Plan

An Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, will examine the document. The Inspector will consider whether the preparation of the plan has been legally compliant.

- Publish details of the time and place at which the Independent Examination is to be held and the name of the Inspector.
- Notify those who made representations at the Publication stage (and have not withdrawn their representations) of relevant matters the Inspector will discuss at the Examination Hearings.

If the Plan is legally compliant the inspector will then consider whether the document is 'sound'. (It will be considered sound if it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy).

- Publish documents relevant to the Independent Examination on the Council's website.

Publishing the Inspector's report

- Publish the Inspectors recommendations and reasons for those recommendations at the Council's Civic Centre in Cannock, the Council's Rugeley area office and libraries within the District and on Council's website.

The Inspector who carried out the Independent Examination will produce and publish an Inspector's Report. Notify those who have requested to be notified of the recommendations, that the recommendations are available. The Inspector will recommend that the document is: Adopted; Adopted with recommended modifications (if the Council asks the Inspector to suggest modifications to make the document sound); or Not adopted.

Adopting the Local Plan Document

- Publish the Local Plan Document, adoption statement, Sustainability Appraisal and details of where and when the document can be viewed

If the document is recommended for adoption (with or without recommended modifications) the Council will consider the Inspector's report and whether it wishes to adopt the document as recommended by the Inspector.

- Send copy of the adoption statement to the Secretary of State.
- Send copy of the Adoption Statement to anyone who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the document.

If the Council decides to adopt the document, this will be by the Full Council, with any main modifications as required

- Use local media/press to advertise the adoption of the Local Plan Document.
- Where applicable, incorporate Main Modifications suggested by the Inspector to ensure the plan is sound and potentially additional modifications (any additional modifications must not materially affect the policies).

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

SPDs are produced to support and elaborate the policies contained in the Local Plan. They provide additional information and policy guidance to support the implementation of a policy. The procedures for SPD preparation are slightly more straightforward than for the Local Plan, as set out below:

Early Community Involvement

- Nature of community involvement will depend on the nature of the document being produced.
- If a site specific SPD is being produced for a major development site, early community involvement will focus on those who live and work in the vicinity of the site. The Council's approach will focus on events involving local residents, businesses etc. from the local area, and will wherever possible be held within that community.
- If SPD is of a more technical nature e.g. car parking standards, the Council's approach will focus more on engaging specialist stakeholders e.g. developers, highway engineers etc.
- Main purpose of this stage is to gather information gathering to consider issues and options.

Formal Consultation

- Consult for no less than 4 weeks and no more than 6 weeks - in most cases the Council will seek to undertake formal consultation for 6 weeks.
- For site specific documents, continue emphasis on engaging those directly affected by the proposal. Notification of the details of the SPD sent to those adjoining the site together with arrangements for consultation.
- Where necessary, hold further public events and advertise locally.

Adoption

- Post detailed response to representations on website.
- Post details of the adoption of the final SPD, and information on how to obtain copies of the SPD and the appropriate Cabinet report on website

6. Involving the Community – New Planning Procedures

The Duty to Co-operate

The Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) place a duty on local planning authorities and other bodies to cooperate with each other to address strategic issues relevant to their areas. The 'Duty to Co-operate' came into effect in November 2011 and requires continuing constructive and active engagement on the preparation of DPDs and activities relating to the sustainable development and use of land, in particular in connection with strategic infrastructure. Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states that *'Local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having successfully co-operated to plan for issues with cross boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination'*.

The bodies that are bound by the Duty are:

- Local Planning Authorities
- County Councils
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Primary Care Trusts (now Clinical Commissioning Groups)
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Local Integrated Transport Authority
- Highways Authorities
- Local Nature Partnerships

Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance

- The Council will produce a Statement of Compliance with the 'Duty to Co-operate' at the Local Plan Publication stage which will set out how the District Council has cooperated with other bodies in the production of the plan. This will include a listing of the organisations involved, a record of meetings and other consultation, a summary of the issues and details of the outcome achieved. In addition, the Council will include consultation with other bodies, beyond the prescribed list, where this is of relevance.
- Where the Duty to Co-operate gives rise to any significant changes to the content of the Local Plan, these will be subject to consultation in accordance with the procedures set out in this SCI.

The Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a recently introduced planning charge, the legislation for which came into force in April 2010. The levy allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise contributions from developers to help pay for infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. Local authorities who wish to charge the levy must produce a Draft Charging Schedule setting out CIL rates for their areas – which are to be expressed as pounds per square metre (£/sq.m), as CIL will be levied on the gross internal floorspace of the net additional liable development. Before it is adopted by the Council, the Draft Schedule has to be approved by an independent examiner.

The requirements which a CIL Charging Schedule has to meet are set out in:

- The Planning Act 2008
- The CIL Regulations 2010, as amended (which also set out consultation requirements)
- The CIL (statutory) Guidance.

Consultation is an important requirement in preparing a CIL because of the need for it to fit local circumstances and to have a positive impact on development. The Guidance states that:-

'By providing additional infrastructure to support development of an area, CIL is expected to have a positive economic effect on development across an area in the medium to long term. In deciding the rate(s) of CIL for inclusion in its draft charging schedule, a key consideration for authorities is the balance between securing additional investment for infrastructure to support development and the potential economic effect of imposing CIL upon development across their area. The CIL regulations place this balance of considerations at the centre of the charge-setting process. In view of the wide variation in local charging circumstances, it is for charging authorities to decide on the appropriate balance for their area and how much potential development they are willing to put at risk through the imposition of CIL. The amount will vary.'

CIL Charging Schedule

In Cannock Chase District, the general consultation measures set out in section 5 will apply to each consultation step required for producing a CIL charging schedule or review. The relevant consultation stages are:

Viability evidence and preliminary draft charging schedule

- Consult with prescribed 'consultation bodies' including neighbouring local planning authorities, Staffordshire County Council and Parish Councils
- Collaborate on infrastructure priorities with Staffordshire County Council and other relevant agencies/bodies such as the Highways Agency, Environment Agency and AONB Unit
- Engage with local developers and others in the property industry
- Engage with local residents and voluntary organisations as appropriate
- Consult for at least six weeks

Draft charging schedule

- Publish draft schedule and relevant evidence
- Consult for at least six weeks
- Accept valid requests to be heard before the examiner at the CIL examination
- Produce and publish statement of modifications (if necessary) for further four week consultation beginning with the day the draft charging schedule is submitted to the examiner.
- Inform those persons invited to make representations that the statement has been published.
- Accept valid requests to be heard before the examiner at the CIL examination on modifications

Examination

- Notify of examination hearings sessions at least four weeks in advance, or two weeks where a statement of modifications has been published and one or more requests to be heard made.
- Examiner encouraged to share draft programme for the hearings at an early stage and inform those who wish to attend (and similar for pre hearing meeting if considered necessary)
- Examiners recommendations

Adoption

- Charging schedule formally adopted by resolution of full Council (if approval recommended by examiner)
- Commencement date inserted into charging schedule
- Six month period for 'correctable errors' to be made known to the Council. If required Council to republish charging schedule with 'correction notice'.

Neighbourhood Planning

There are three main mechanisms for Neighbourhood Planning – Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build. Each enables a community to achieve different things.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. It can be used to:

- Develop a shared vision for a neighbourhood.
- Choose where homes, shops, offices and other development may be built.
- Identify and protect important local green spaces.
- Influence what new buildings should look like.

A Neighbourhood Development Order can help to implement a shared vision by granting planning permission to certain types of development in certain locations, without the need to submit a planning application to the local planning authority. A Neighbourhood Development Order can apply to all of a Neighbourhood Plan area, or a particular site within the neighbourhood.

The Community Right to Build (CRTB) allows local communities to undertake small-scale, site-specific, community-led developments. It is a particular type of Neighbourhood Development Order which allows community organisations in some cases to bring forward small scale development on specific sites without following the usual planning permission process. However, a CRTB need to be in conformity with the Local Plan and, if applicable, the Neighbourhood Plan for any given area. A CRTB needs to relate to an approved Neighbourhood Area (see 8.19 below). As with Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders, a CRTB is subject to an independent examination and a referendum and the Local Authority needs to be involved in these stages in the same way.

The process for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and a Neighbourhood Development Order is similar. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are not prepared by the local planning authority. There are two types of ‘qualifying body’ that can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan or a Neighbourhood Development Order:

- **Parish and Town Councils:** In areas where a parish or town council exists, these are the organisations which will usually be responsible for a Neighbourhood Plan, but other parts of the community may prepare a plan if they are established as a neighbourhood area. A Neighbourhood Plan can, but does not have to, cover the whole area of the parish or town.
- **Neighbourhood forums:** Where a parish or town council does not exist, community members, including those with business interests in the area, can come together to create a neighbourhood forum. Only one neighbourhood forum is allowed to exist for each neighbourhood to be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan.

Consultation and community involvement are important elements in the Neighbourhood Planning process. At the issues and draft plan stages, this will be the responsibility of the plan making body, but the District Council has a significant role at the other stages identified below, including, the proposed Neighbourhood

Plan Area, the proposed creation of a Neighbourhood Plan Forum, the Independent Examination and the Local Referendum.

The requirements for consultation are set out in the 2012 Town And Country Planning, England - The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, In each case, the regulations refer to the need for the District Council to; -
“publicise..... on their website and in such other manner as they consider is likely to bring the area application to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the area application relates”

The Council’s role in Neighbourhood Planning

Planning Policy pages, on the Council website will be used to provide further information

The District Council will make available Neighbourhood Planning guidance to Parish and Town Councils and Neighbourhood Forums.

The Council will not produce a Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of a local community but will give assistance and advice in the plan preparation process.

The Council, as the local planning authority, will, if requested, administer the formal designation of Neighbourhood Area(s) to be covered by Neighbourhood Plan(s).

Where relevant the Council will formally approve a Neighbourhood Forum.

The Council will check a draft Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it meets all the relevant legislation and regulations and that it generally conforms to the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

Subject to the above, the Council will arrange for an independent examination of a Neighbourhood Plan.

If the plan passes an examination, the Council, as local planning authority, will arrange a local referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan.

If the referendum supports the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council will adopt it as part of the overall development plan (which includes the Local Plan).

Other means of stimulating community involvement, as outlined in this SCI, will be used according to local circumstances. Parish and town councils and Neighbourhood Forums will be encouraged to apply the principles set out in the SCI to their own consultation and community engagement programmes.

7. Involving the Community - Planning Applications

This section sets out how people have the opportunity to become involved in the decisions being taken on individual planning applications.

The Government sets out minimum standards for consultation on planning applications in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. There are three categories of application, which require differing levels of publicity:

Categories of Planning Application

1. All applications subject to an environmental assessment, all applications which are a departure from the Development Plan, and all applications affecting public rights of way are required to be publicised by the display of a notice on the site, and by the placing of an advertisement in a local newspaper.
2. Other applications defined as “major” applications by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 are required to be publicised by the display of a site notice or letters written to adjoining owners/occupiers of land, and by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper. (Major applications are those comprising a residential development of more than 10 dwellings, or residential development in outline form on a site of 0.5 hectares or more, or the erection of other buildings creating 1,000 square metres of floor space, or outline applications on sites of 1 hectare or more.)
3. All other applications are required to be publicised by the display of a site notice or by letters to adjoining owners/occupiers.

For the following application types, newspaper advertisements may be required in addition to site notices and/or neighbour notification:

- Applications for Listed Building Consent,
- Applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building
- Applications affecting the character or appearance of a Conservation Area

The Council’s policy on publicity for planning applications was adopted in June 2003 following a “Best Value” review of the Planning Service. It exceeds the statutory requirements and guidance set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. The categories of applications to which the Publicity Policy applies are:

- Applications for full planning permission
- Applications for outline planning permission
- Applications for approval of reserved matters where these include one or more element involving siting, design, means of access and landscaping
- Advertisement applications
- Applications for Listed Building consent

- Applications for Conservation Area consent
- Applications for prior notification of telecommunications, agricultural and forestry development
- Applications for Certificates of Lawfulness of Existing Development.

Significant amended or additional details relating to any of the above categories of application received whilst an application is being processed are also publicised.

A considerable amount of negotiation takes place on a large number of applications, particularly the major ones. This is a very important and crucial part of the development control process, steering development towards a more acceptable form and therefore acting in a positive manner. This dialogue between planning officers and developers and their professional advisors is something which the Government and this Council actively encourages. The Localism Act 2011 includes a requirement for developers to consult with local communities before putting in a planning application for large schemes (not yet in force at 1 January 2014). Furthermore developers will have to show what changes they have made to the scheme as a result of the consultation. This helps to ensure that once an application is submitted it has already been amended to reflect local concerns. In some cases, a proposal can generate much public interest and provide many letters of objection.

Forms of Notification of Planning Applications

1. Newspaper advertisement

The following categories of application are publicised by way of newspaper advertisement:-

- Applications including an Environmental Statement.
- Departures from the Development Plan.
- Applications affecting public rights of way.
- Major applications (see above).
- Applications for Listed Building consent.
- Applications for development affecting the setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area.

2. Site notices

Brightly coloured site notices are displayed in connection with all of the above categories of application in addition to newspaper advertisements, and are also displayed in connection with the following list of cases:

- Those affecting nearby property by causing noise, smell, vibration or other nuisance.
- Those attracting crowds, traffic and noise into a generally quiet area.
- Those causing activity and noise during unsociable hours.
- Those resulting in significant change, for example, to old buildings.
- Those resulting in serious reduction or loss of light or privacy beyond adjacent properties.

- Those affecting the setting of an ancient monument or archaeological site.
- Those affecting trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.
- Those where the ownership or occupation of adjoining land is uncertain.

3. Notification by letter

Occupiers of properties, whether residential or business or community services (e.g. schools, churches, community halls) are notified by letter of all applications listed above. The extent of notification will depend on the nature of the application.

- **Householder applications (extensions to dwellings, buildings within the curtilage of dwellings, walls and fences).** Notification in these cases involves those neighbouring properties directly affected by the proposed development.
- **New built developments and Changes of Use where the impact is of the activities taking place at the site.** Notification takes place more widely than immediate neighbours, based on an initial judgement of the likely impact of the development, including consideration of factors such as direction of vehicle and pedestrian movements to and from the site, and the potential extent of disturbance from activities on the site.
- **New built development and Changes of Use where the effect of traffic flows to and from the site can be of significant impact.** Where a significant increase in traffic is likely in a residential street (as opposed to on a classified road) notifying everyone in the street who would experience additional traffic flows past their property.
- **Telecommunications masts.** On this category of application, notification is based on the distance the property is away from the site of the mast and all properties within 100m radius are consulted on such applications.

Content of notification letters, site notices and newspaper advertisements

All the published material contains a description of the application, where it can be viewed, the timescale for responses and the offer of an appointment with the case officer to discuss the matter. Information is also given about the Council's Consultations Charter relating to planning applications, a copy of which is enclosed with the notification letters. Finally, reference is also made to the Local Code of Conduct for the Planning Process which explains the decision-making procedures, copies of which are available at Council offices and also on the Council's website.

Other ways in which information can be obtained on applications being considered by the council are:

- **Weekly List of Planning Applications.** This is made available at Council offices and on the Council's website and contains basic information about the location of the proposed development and a description of it.
- **Availability of copies of applications.** All applications are on deposit at the Civic Centre in Cannock. Those relating to Rugeley and Brereton also have copies on deposit at the area office in Rugeley. To conform with the Government's targets for electronic communication, the Council provides all information on 'live' planning applications and those determined after January 2010 on the Council's website.
- **Copies with Parish and Town Councils.** Copies of applications are sent to Parish and Town Councils as part of the consultation process with those bodies, giving a further opportunity for Members of the public to view applications at meetings of those bodies or at parish offices.
- **Exhibitions and presentations.** For applications which would involve major new development affecting a substantial area of the district, e.g. large new housing estates, employment sites or town centre redevelopment, plans are displayed in an appropriate location close to where the development is taking place, e.g. libraries and community centres. When it is appropriate to explain complex proposals, planning officers attend such exhibitions. Planning Officers attend meetings of Parish and Town Councils (or their respective planning committees) when requested to do so to explain the contents of applications to members of these Councils and any members of the public who may be present at such meetings.
- **Home visits.** People notified of applications, but who are unable to visit Council Offices or libraries to view plans because of mobility problems can arrange for a home visit by the Case Officer.
- **Office meetings.** Case officers are available, by appointment, at the Civic Centre to meet people wishing to discuss applications in which they have an interest.

Responding to Publicity about Applications

All comments which people wish to be taken into account in the decision making process need to be made in writing either by letter, email or by completing a comments form available at Council offices.

Timescale for responses

21 days is allowed for responses to initial notification of applications and a minimum of 10 days for re-notification on amendments.

The decision making process

The Council's published Code of Conduct for the Planning Process explains how decisions are made on planning applications. It sets out which decisions are delegated to officers and how comments made as a result of publicity on applications are considered, in most cases, by the Planning Control Committee before making a decision. The provision for people to address the Planning Control Committee when it is meeting to determine applications is also explained. Finally, the local Consultations Charter which is sent out to people notified of planning applications includes a list of relevant planning considerations at a general level and what are not, in order to assist people in making comments which can be taken into account in the decision making process. Information received from Statutory Consultees as a result of consultations will be taken into account when drafting any necessary conditions and S.106 agreements.

Process following a decision

A letter is sent to everyone who has submitted written comments (whether by post or e-mail), advising them of the decision on the planning application (whether or not it was determined by officers under delegated powers or at Committee). The decision, if taken at Committee, is also publicised in the Committee minutes on the Council's website. Copies of planning decisions (including S.106 agreements) are provided as a matter of procedure.

Appealing a decision

If an applicant has an application refused or disagrees with conditions attached to the granting of permission they have a right of appeal. This right of appeal does not extend to a person notified of an application – known as a third party.

If and when an appeal is received, anyone who wrote in on the application is notified in writing of the appeal, and information is provided on how to make their views known (either in writing in a written representations appeal, or in person at an informal hearing or public inquiry). There is no need to re-submit previous information sent in on the planning application as all this information will be copied and sent to the Inspectorate. Ward Councillors are also individually notified.

Where an informal hearing or Public Inquiry is to be held to consider an appeal a site notice is erected and the appeal is publicised in the press, including the date, time and the location of the hearing/Inquiry. Third parties are able to attend both informal hearings and Inquires and speak subject to the discretion of the Inspector, who may limit the number of individuals wishing to make very similar points.

Consultation on Planning Applications and other applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning Acts

This part of the process includes both the statutory requirements for consultation prior to decision being made on applications, most of which are included in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, and non-statutory consultation with organisations with expertise to contribute to the process.

Pre-Application Advice. Planning officers are available to offer pre-application advice by telephone, meeting or in writing. Other professional advice can be made available at this stage both 'in-house' and externally, for example from Landscape Architects, Arboriculturalists, and the Council's Ecologist. Partner organisations, most commonly Staffordshire County Council Transportation, Archaeology, the Environment Agency, English Nature and the Highways Agency will provide pre-application advice co-ordinated by Planning officers. Although the Council currently does not charge a fee for pre-application advice, it reserves the right to do so in the future, should circumstances allow. Article 20(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 relates to the duty to respond to consultations within 21 days, which is an appropriate target in relation to the provision of pre-application advice.

Application Consultations – Statutory. In most cases this takes place in writing, with copies of applications or the relevant parts of applications provided. The County Council Highway Authority, the Environment Agency and the Coal Authority also provide standing advice in appropriate cases in order to speed up the process. The Highway Authority also provides advice via visits to the District Council by Highway Engineers, when required.

Application Consultation – Non-Statutory. This includes both internal (other Council departments) and external bodies with expertise relevant to particular types of application. Consultation is in writing with copies of applications or the relevant parts of applications provided.

9. Resources, Management and Monitoring

The Council allocates seven staff to planning policy and nine staff to development management and administration. The teams work closely with colleagues and partners and adopt a positive approach to involving external groups and individuals in planning processes. By ensuring that community involvement is targeted and realistic the Council aims to make the best use of the resources available to it, recognising that existing networks linked to other plans and programmes will be particularly valuable. The costs of community involvement will be met from dedicated budgets. Where possible, joint community consultation and engagement will be undertaken.

Community involvement in the Development Management process, following procedures in Section 9, is an integral part of the processing of planning applications. Consequently, current staffing levels and resources reflect this. Involvement will be monitored through periodic customer satisfaction surveys.

If required, to avoid unnecessary delays, the Council will seek to employ consultants to assist in the process of community involvement. The management of resources and their availability for community involvement will be dependent on the progress made on the preparation of relevant documents. Monitoring progress in plan making and an assessment of the success of various community involvement exercises will inform the Council on the need to review, and where necessary, amend the SCI.

The SCI will be reviewed as appropriate in the light of changes in national legislation and policy, joint working experiences and consultation with stakeholders. This might include changes to reflect best practice in community/stakeholder involvement, managing expectations more effectively or addressing specific problems or concerns in relation to joint working.

The Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) will be instrumental in monitoring progress of the Local Plan, and will provide a basis for the allocation and prioritisation of resources for the preparation of the Local Plan and SPD.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Confused?

This guide to the SCI is here to help by answering some of the questions you may have.

What is the SCI?

The SCI outlines the approaches for creating wider community involvement. Which will be done through providing access to and gaining information from local people, allowing local knowledge and local people to help shape the planning future of the district.

The SCI is important to us and the district. It's about creating a community commitment to the districts development; alongside promoting aspects such as regeneration and investment within the area. However, a key factor for you is about involving the community to clearly identify local priorities and needs as well as finding easier solutions to local problems through the use of local knowledge.

What are the Benefits?

Who will the Council involve?

The engagement of all across the community regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious views etc. is important to the Council. Alongside the inclusion of the local people, different groups and sectors within the district are considered throughout the community involvement process including; Council members, Parish or Town Councils, The Chase Community Partnership, The Citizens' Panel, Local Organisations, Business Groups, Agents/Developers, Hard to Reach Groups and Neighbouring Authorities and Communities.

Where will involvement occur?

Community involvement is a critical element of "Localism" which underpins the new planning system, whilst reflecting and remaining within the resources available to the Council. With this the Council aims to involve the community and local people in Local Development Documents such as the revision of the Local Plan, as well as on Planning Applications.

How will involvement occur?

The Council has acknowledged that community involvement needs to be a continuous process allowing everyone involved to see how ideas have been developed at the various stages, in keeping with this, the nature of engagement needs to encompass all aspects of the community right across the district. Due to this, the SCI undertakes this notion with differing methods of community involvement at different stages dependent on the relative document.

On the Local Plan

Without community involvement there will be no ownership of the Local Plan and therefore delivery will be much more difficult. Due to the Local Plan dealing with more strategic aspects of planning surrounding the future development of the district, widespread input will allow for agreement around the vision and objectives for the development of the area.

The Local Plan will be formed of two parts. The first part will incorporate the Core Strategy and the Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan. Whereas the second part will consist of; Site Specific Allocations, Planning Standards, the Safeguarding of Land for Future Development beyond the Current Local Plan Period:2028 and the Safeguarding of Routes where necessary. Consultation and engagement will be undertaken on both parts of the Local Plan. The format that such consultations and community involvement exercises will take is outlined below.

The Council will have flexibility in the beginning to decide upon the most appropriate level of community involvement, and a series of consultations will be held for each aspect at an early stage with all relevant organisations and interest groups or individuals, this will be the **Initial (Pre-publication) Consultation**.

Following on from this there will be **Pre-Publication Participation** on the Local Plan part one or part two; this will consist of a consultation being held on the relevant draft Local Plan. In accordance to this the consultation dates will be publicised in a press release and every attempt will be made to attend any meetings/events involving Parish Councils, interest groups etc. However, it must be understood that whilst the aim is to produce a Local Plan that has wide community support, it can perhaps be anticipated that matters/issues may arise on which it will not be possible to build consensus.

A **Pre-submission (Publication) Stage** of the Local Plan will occur and will consist of a six week consultation of the final document the Council must submit; an online system will be utilised. To ensure awareness of the consultation is raised as well as informing local people the means by which the document can be inspected and how any objection may be lodged is understood, the Council will make use of press releases and other media (as appropriate) well in advance of deadlines, they will also use the relevant section of the Council website. It should also be understood that late submissions will not be accepted.

Following submission an **Independent Examination** will occur. The Council will notify all those whom have submitted representation, at least six weeks before the hearing date, of the time and place and the name of the independent person appointed to conduct it. At this hearing anyone with an outstanding objection has the right to have their representation considered by an independent inspector.

An **Inspectors Report** will be produced to assess the soundness of the plan, and after the **adoption of the Local plan** reviews will be held regularly in response to changes in national planning policy and/or the results of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report. The results of both of the review processes will be published on the council website and made available for inspection. Any proposed amendments will be subject to the community involvement provisions set out in the SCI.

**On Supplementary
Planning Documents
(SPDs)**

These may be produced to support proposals contained in the local plan. The nature of community involvement for SPDs will very much depend on the nature of the document being produced, though early community involvement is still seen as key.

- 1) Site Specific for a Major Development Site
Early community involvement events will be held focussing on those who live and work in the vicinity; held whenever possible in that community.
- 2) Of a Technical Nature e.g. car parking standards
The Council's approach will focus on engaging specialist stakeholders e.g. developers, highway engineers etc.

A formal six week consultation will occur, though for site specific sites emphasis will remain on engaging those directly affected and adjoining sites will receive notification of the proposal and consultation arrangements. Press releases will be used to inform the wider community and the Council's website will be used to post details of the adoption of the final plan, how to obtain copies and the appropriate Cabinet report, which will contain a detailed response to representations.

Local People will have the continued opportunity to become involved in the decisions being taken on individual planning applications, and the SCI outlines the community involvement in the processing of planning applications.

**On Planning
Applications**

The Council has a publicity policy for planning applications which apply to specific categories including (for full list see SCI):

- Applications for full planning permission
- Applications for outline planning permission
- Advertisement Applications
- Applications for Conservation Area consent
- Applications for Certificates of Lawfulness of Existing Development

As well as this there are three categories of application which require differing levels of publicity:

1. All applications subject to an environmental assessment, all applications which are a departure from the Development Plan, and all applications affecting public rights of way are required to be publicised by the display of a notice on the site, and by the placing of an advertisement in a local paper.
2. Other applications defined as “major” applications are required to be publicised by the display of site notices or letters written to adjoining owners/occupiers of land, and by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper.
3. All other applications are required to be publicised by the display of a site notice or by letters to adjoining owners/occupiers

For the following application types newspaper advertisements may be required in addition to site notices or neighbour notification.

- Applications for Listed Building Consent
- Conservation Area Consent
- Applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building, or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area

A few examples of what Community Involvement in Planning Applications consists of (for full list see SCI):



-Notification by Letter: Occupiers of properties, regardless of whether residential, business or community services are notified by letter of all applications within their area.



-Negotiation: An important and crucial aspect of the development control process, which aims to steer development towards a more acceptable form and therefore acting in a positive manner.



-Site Notices: Brightly coloured site notices are displayed in connection with all the categories that Newspaper Advertisement applies to as well as to cases for example: Affecting trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.



-Newspaper Advertisement: Specific categories of application are publicised by way of newspaper advertisement, this includes for example: Applications including an Environmental Statement.

There is provision made for people to address the Planning Control Committee when it is meeting to determine applications. After a decision has been taken on a planning application a letter is sent to everyone who has submitted written comments, advising them of the decision of the planning applications and whether or not it was determined by officers under delegated powers or at Committee.

If an application is refused or the applicant disagrees with conditions attached to the granting of permission they have a right of appeal.

If and when an appeal is received, anyone who wrote in on the application is notified in writing of the appeal, and information is provided on how to have their views known. There is no need to re-submit previous information sent in.

Where an Informal Hearing or Public Inquiry is to be held to consider an appeal a site notice is erected and the appeal is publicised in the press, including date, time and location of the Hearing/Inquiry.

The SCI also takes into consideration new planning approaches brought in as part of The Localism Act and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this includes The Duty to Cooperate, The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Neighbourhood Planning.

What else is in the SCI?

-Duty to Cooperate is an aspect of The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which places upon local authorities and other bodies a duty to cooperate with each other to address strategic issues relevant to their areas. The duty requires continuing engagement of a constructive and active nature on the preparation of development plan documents and other activities relating to the sustainable development and use of land, in particular in connection with considered infrastructure.

-Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new planning charge that allows local authorities in both England and Wales to raise contributions from developers towards helping to pay for infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. Preparatory work is being undertaken on a CIL, and a consultation will be required as there is a need for it to fit local circumstances and to have a positive impact on development.

-Neighbourhood Planning consists of three mechanisms that each enables a community to achieve differing things. A neighbourhood plan is a way of helping local people within local communities to influence the planning that occurs within the area in which they live and work. Unlike a Local Plan, neighbourhood plans are not prepared by the LPA. The District Council is required to give assistance and advice but it cannot control the neighbourhood plan preparation plan, nor can it produce a neighbourhood plan on behalf of the local community. Consultation and community involvement are important elements in the neighbourhood planning process.

Where are the documents available to the public?

The Council makes documentation available to the public in a variety of ways. In terms of the Local Plan and other Planning Policy Documents they are made available through the following routes:

- **Council Website**; where supporting evidence can also be found to enable understanding
- **Civic Centre, Cannock**; available for inspection (for the period it is available for comment)
- **Newspaper Advertisement**; where and when relevant material can be inspected can be found within local newspapers circulating within the district
- **Local Libraries**; relevant documents are available for inspection at libraries within the district
- **Alternative Feedback**; copies of all documents can be provided where required (i.e. Braille, large print, alternative languages etc.)
- **Provision of feedback** to respondents wherever possible