



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20th August 2026

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet Member for Planning

Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of updates to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which has been amended to take account of legislative changes as well as comments received as a result of the recent consultation process.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Review and provide feedback on the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which incorporates changes in legislation and findings from a six-week public consultation on the proposed changes to the document.**
- 2. Recommend to Cabinet that the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is adopted.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting communities
Sustainable South Kesteven
Enabling economic opportunities
Housing
Effective council

Which wards are impacted?

All Wards

1. Implications

The following potential implications have been identified and considered: finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Any costs associated with consultations on planning matters are contained within existing budgets.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The council is legally required, under section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to produce an SCI, to set out how we will engage with our communities who have an interest in matters relating to development in their area.

Completed by: Emma Powley, Interim Democratic Services Manager

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.3 The Statement of Community Involvement is designed to ensure the Council meets its responsibilities to consult on development. Any consultation will need to be carried out in a manner that is accessible. Therefore, should a consultee require the information in an alternative format, the Council must provide it on request.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Development Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 One of the Council's key priorities in our current Corporate Plan (2024-2027) is 'to be an effective council'. To do this, the Council will actively and effectively engage with and listen to our residents; this includes through public consultation and engagement with our services including Planning.
- 2.2 The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in accordance with Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), setting out how they will engage local communities and other

interested parties in preparing planning policy documents and determining planning applications. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council intends to seek the views of different sectors of the community during the preparation of planning policy documents and when planning applications are received.

- 2.3 National Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the SCI must be published on the Council's website. Under the new Local Plan system brought into force on 25th March 2026 by The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, the legacy five-year SCI review requirement is replaced by a mandatory Local Plan Engagement Strategy. The current SCI was adopted in 2021, and since then both national planning legislation and local practice have evolved significantly. A review is therefore necessary to ensure the SCI reflects up-to-date legislative and regulatory requirements, as well as lessons learned from several years of applying it in practice.
- 2.4 The Council is legally required to consult stakeholders, including the public, on a range of planning matters and the minimum requirements are set out in legislation. The SCI will set out the legislative requirements along with any additional steps that the Council will choose to do, as a minimum, when consulting on planning matters. The relevant planning matters include planning applications as well as planning policy documents.
- 2.5 Having a clear arrangement for carrying out consultation will help establish a two-way process between the community and the Council. It provides communities with a clear understanding of when they will be consulted and how they can engage in planning matters in a transparent way.
- 2.6 The amendments to the Local Plan processes must be reflected in the SCI and therefore the council has produced a revised version of the document for 2026 (Appendix 1 to the report).
- 2.7 Following Council approval of the draft SCI for consultation, a 6-week public consultation was held on 13th March 2026 until 24th April 2026 resulting in 13 representations being received. These have been considered and have informed amendments to the final version of the document (Appendix 1 to the report).

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the community on planning policy preparation, including neighbourhood planning, and on planning applications. It also covers planning appeals and enforcement matters.
- 3.2 The draft SCI is set out in five sections:

- Introduction
 - Planning Policy Documents
 - Neighbourhood Planning
 - Who is involved in the Plan Preparation Process
 - Community Involvement in Planning Applications
- 3.3 Information is presented in a clear and transparent way for the wider audience and includes clear Headings and Fonts. Tables are used to help guide the reader to make it user friendly.
- 3.4 The SCI also contains updated links to all the relevant pages on the Council's website and other external sites so the reader can easily find out more information if they wish.

Proposed amendments to the SCI

- 3.5 The reviewed SCI follows a similar format to the existing SCI for the Council. The following changes have been made to reflect comments received during the consultation process and legislative changes associated with the new plan-making system, which came into effect on 25 March 2026. These steps have been taken in order to update the document and ensure the Council's approach to consultation is robust:

Changes made in response to the consultation March-April 2026 (Appendix 2):

- Introduction to the new plan-making system and associated legislative changes
- Inclusion of new arrangements for Supplementary Plans (SPs), which replace SPDs under the new plan-making system

Other changes made to the SCI:

- Update of the contents page
- Introduction to the new plan-making system and associated legislative changes
- Inclusion of new arrangements for Supplementary Plans (SPs), which replace SPDs under the new plan-making system
- Updates to reflect the changes in the Coronavirus Act 2020 and to future-proof the SCI for similar exceptional circumstances.
- Introduction to the stages involved in the preparation of a Local Plan under the new plan-making system
- Introduction to the stages involved in the preparation of Supplementary Plans under the new plan-making system
- Update to the Duty to Co-Operate section to reflect revocation
- Inclusion of Planning Policy Team contact details and information on joining the Council's planning policy consultation database
- Updates to the consultation methods used for plan-making under the new system (Table 2)
- Updates to how SKDC will consult on Local Plans under the new plan-making system (Appendix 3 to the SCI)

- Updates to how SKDC will consult on Supplementary Plans under the new plan-making system (Appendix 5 to the SCI)
- Updates to the glossary to explain legacy plan-making terminology (Appendix 9 to the SCI)

3.6 Under previous planning regulations, the SCI was required to undergo an independent examination. This requirement has been removed, and the SCI can be approved and brought into effect more easily by a resolution of Council. Whilst the content and process for preparing a SCI is no longer prescribed by regulation, the Cabinet agreed that a draft SCI should be subject to a public consultation as it is considered good practice. The consultation has since been undertaken and 13 representations were received. These have been summarised and can be viewed in Appendix 2 to the report.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 To not review and update the SCI and continue to use the existing document. However, the existing SCI does not reflect current requirements set out in legislation or regulations. The Council is also required to review the SCI every five years from the date of its adoption. The do-nothing option has therefore been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council is required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and to subsequently review that document every five years. Whilst it is not mandatory to consult on the draft document, it is good practice to do so.
- 5.2 Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) provides that the Council must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, which is a statement of the authority's policy as to the involvement in the exercise of its functions.
- 5.3 It is therefore recommended that the Scrutiny Committee reviews the draft SCI and approves this document to reflect the specific requirements arising from national guidance.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 A 6-week public consultation on the draft revised SCI was undertaken between the 13th March 2026 and the 24th April 2026. There is no requirement to consult on the SCI, however, it is good practice to do so.
- 6.2 The SCI consultation document was made available to view and access from the Council website.

- 6.3 A general notification of the consultation was sent out via email and letter to those on our consultation database, including town / parish councils, statutory bodies and Ward Councillors.
- 6.4 The council received 13 comments from various consultees, including both statutory and non-statutory.
- 6.5 The draft SCI has been refined, taking into account the comments made during the consultation. The key findings from the consultation have been presented in Appendix 2 to the report which presents a summary of comments received and if any action was required in response to the consultation.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
- 7.2 Link to current adopted SKDC SCI - <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-local-plans/statement-community-involvement>
- 7.3 Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 - <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/South%20Kesteven%20District%20Council%20Corporate%20Plan%20-%202024%20to%202027.pdf>
- 7.4 Link to the cabinet decision to consult on the SCI – <https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=34510>

8. Appendices

- 1.1. Appendix 1: Statement of Community Involvement (2026)
- 1.2. Appendix 2: Consultation Summary Report
- 1.3. Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment