

Slough Borough Council

Information needed	Details
Report To:	Planning Committee
Date:	30 th July 2025
Subject:	Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
Chief Officer:	Dan Ray; Chief Planner
Contact Officer:	Kerry Hobbs, Senior Planning Policy Officer
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	NO
Appendices:	Statement of Community Involvement, Draft for consultation (July 2025)

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on how the Council will engage with the community for Planning Policy documents, for example the new Local Plan and Development Management in determination of planning applications. Members are requested to note that the consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is for 8 weeks, which started on 4th July and closes on 29th August 2025.

Recommendations:

- 1.2 Committee is requested to note:

That the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (at Appendix 1) is out for consultation for eight weeks which started on 4th July and closes on 29th August 2025.

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 Planning helps define the places where people, live, work and play. Everyone should have the chance to be involved in the planning process and make a difference in shaping the environment around us.
- 2.2 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory requirement and sets out how we will involve the community in plan making and when considering planning applications. We are consulting on this draft as part of the process to adopt it. However, no statutory requirement to consult on SCI. Once adopted it will be published on the Council's website.

Background

- 2.3 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is required under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 2.4 The last SCI was adopted in 2006. An updated draft SCI was prepared alongside the consultation on preferred spatial strategy for Local Plan in 2017. Both these are out of date and do not meet current regulations.
- 2.5 The proposed new SCI covers both Planning Policy and Development Management. The SCI draft for consultation is at Appendix 1.
- 2.6 For Planning Policy, the SCI sets out what documents and who we will consult on for the preparation of the Local Plan and supporting documents. This includes a section on the methods of consultation we will use, who we consult and how we use the responses.
- 2.7 The section on Development Management sets out the planning process and requirements for consultation. This discusses pre-applications, planning applications, appeals and enforcement.
- 2.8 In preparing the SCI, regard has been had to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as well as the Councils resident engagement expertise, (such as how and when and how frequently to consult), Equalities, Data protection and Accessibility duties.
- 2.9 The SCI is out for consultation for 8 weeks to take account of the school holidays and bank holiday.

Plan Making

- 2.10 The SCI will apply to the production of the new local plan. This will include a consultation on a completed draft Local Plan and Proposals Map. It will also be used for planning documents that guide the interpretation of policy such as the developers guides.
- 2.11 The SCI is an important part of demonstrating how the interests of the community are embedded in the statutory plan making process. These include the requirement for consultations to be open to the public, and to consult prescribed representatives of the community and their interests. These are referred to as 'general' and 'specific' consultation bodies. Specific bodies are those that we are required to consult, which are prescribed by regulations. General bodies include voluntary bodies, different racial, ethnic groups.
- 2.12 The SCI also explains that the Council must follow the legal requirements for consultation, such as the rules for commenting on Planning Policy Documents so we can take them into account. The processes can change at different regulatory stages and with what is required - from preparation of the Plan to adoption. The phasing for consultation periods on the new Local Plan is published in the Local

Development Scheme (LDS). The Government is also making changes to planning so any elements here that become out of date may be superseded by national policy.

- 2.13 There may be occasions where we do not consult the public on documents that are specialist or commercially sensitive. This is important to manage expectations and not over consult the public where their opinions cannot be taken into account. Examples of these may be grant funded research, methodologies, viability reports or development briefs.
- 2.14 How we consult and engage has developed over the years due to advances in technology. One of these methods is use of internet, social media and digital documents. The SCI lists a mix of methods to facilitate inclusive consultation. This will include notifying consultation bodies via emails, website, consultation portal, and could include leaflets and exhibitions. Hard copies of the consultation material will be available in Council offices and in local libraries.
- 2.15 The SCI also explains how people can participate in a way which meets the legal rules for being considered, and how what they say is reported and used. Elements of these are again guided by rules and regulations, but also the Councils duty to best value in investing staff and financial resources. This means for example that comments need to be relevant to the consultation, and that we will meet the statutory duties to provide a consultation statement but will not be able to reply to each person directly and specifically.

Development Management

- 2.16 Development Management is a process of decision making where we determine whether a proposal for development should be granted or refused planning permission. Planning applications are assessed in accordance with local and national planning policies as well as planning material considerations.
- 2.17 There are four main aspects to the Development Management process, pre applications, planning applications and other applications, appeals and enforcement.
- 2.18 The SCI also provides information with regards to how the Development Management Team will consult the public in line with the legislation (Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) England Order 2015 (DMPO 2015) for registered applications.
- 2.19 Depending on the type of application the consultation can be in the form of a site notice, publication of a notice in local newspaper or by letter sent to neighbouring properties.
- 2.20 To assist Applicants, particularly for major developments, the Council offers a pre applications service to provide advice and guidance to front load the application. This enables earlier engagement and for applicants to understand what is required before a planning application is submitted. The SCI also explains we expect Developers to do their own consultations with the public for

major planning applications, but that these are separate from the Council's decision-making process.

- 2.21 In terms of appeals process, applicants have the right to appeal against a decision by the Local Planning Authority to refuse planning permission and other grounds to i.e conditions.
- 2.22 In accordance with current regulations for Appeals, interested parties (those that made representations to the Local Planning Authority when the application was submitted) are notified of current appeals and now make their representations directly to Planning Inspectorate with regards to the appeal.
- 2.23 Planning Enforcement team are responsible for tackling alleged breaches of planning control. This includes building work that does not have the appropriate planning permission, changes of the use of sites without planning permission, the display of unauthorised advertisements and unapproved works to protected trees and listed buildings.

Summary

- 2.24 The draft SCI is being consulted on for 8 weeks and be updated as necessary. The final SCI will be adopted by Cabinet and then be published on the Council's website (and replace the last adopted SCI from 2006). Any future consultations will then be in line with the requirements set out in the SCI. It can then be reviewed in 5 years or earlier if needed.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 This document has been prepared in house; no additional resources or costs are required.

3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 It is a statutory requirement to have an adopted SCI. The 2006 adopted SCI and 2017 draft SCI are over 5 years old, and do not include Development Management so needed updating.

3.3 Environmental implications

- 3.3.1 No direct implications.

3.4 Equality implications

- 3.4.1 Equalities impact assessment screening was prepared and will be published on adoption of the SCI. The SCI sets out how we will comply with the requirements of Equalities Act 2010.

4. Background Papers

[Slough Statement of Community Involvement \(Adopted 2006\)](#)

[Slough Draft Statement of Community Involvement \(Jan 2017\) local-plan-review-draft-statement-of-community-involvement-jan-2017](#)

Appendix

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Draft for consultation (July 2025)