

Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

Subject of assessment:	Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)			
Coverage:	Middlesbrough-wide			
This is a decision relating to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Function
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)		
It is a:	New approach:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Revision of an existing approach:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
It is driven by:	Legislation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local or corporate requirements:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description:	<p>Key aims, objectives and activities The purpose of the SCI is to set down the degree of involvement/engagement that the community and other stakeholders can expect in the taking of decisions on development proposals, and future planning strategy within the town.</p> <p>Statutory drivers (set out exact reference) The review of the SCI has been necessitated by amendments made by Central Government to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, and the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach The review is mainly to update the Council's current adopted SCI. The review does not change the objectives of the SCI, and how the Council intends to consult on development proposals, the future planning strategy within the town.</p> <p>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) The Council, residents and stakeholders.</p> <p>Intended outcomes Adoption of the SCI.</p>			
Live date:	To be confirmed.			
Lifespan:	Until there are significant changes in legislation requiring a review of the SCI.			
Date of next review:	None at present.			

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As the review is to update the current adopted SCI in accordance with the above legislation and regulations, it is considered the guidance will not impact negatively on individual human rights.
Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As the review is to update the current adopted SCI in accordance with the above legislation and regulations, it is considered the guidance will not impact negatively on equality.
Community cohesion Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As the review is to update the current adopted SCI in accordance with the above legislation and regulations, it is considered the guidance will not impact negatively on community cohesion.
Middlesbrough 2020 – Our Vision Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for Middlesbrough?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As the review is to update the current adopted SCI in accordance with the above legislation and regulations, it is considered the guidance will not impact negatively on the Council’s Middlesbrough 2020 - Our Vision.
Organisational management / Change Programme Could the decision impact negatively on organisational management or the transformation of the Council’s services as set out in its Change Programme?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As the review is to update the current adopted SCI in accordance with the above legislation and regulations, it is considered the guidance will not impact negatively on the Organisational management or the Change Programme of the Council.
Next steps: ➡ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed. ➡ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.				

Assessment completed by:	Charlton Gibben	Head of Service:	
Date:	04/12/15	Date:	

*Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

Appendix 2

Consultation Statement for the Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

Introduction

1. This document sets out the consultation that was carried out on the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the representations received and the Council's response to those representations.

How the consultation was undertaken

2. Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012, the Council sent a letter (dated 25 September 2015) to its main consultees detailing the Council's intention to review the adopted SCI, and to invite them to comment on a revised document. The letter and accompanying response form was also sent to the Council's other consultees.
3. In total over 150 letters were sent out to relevant authorities in the local area, general consultation bodies defined in the Regulations, another local community groups and others that had requested to be kept informed on progress of the Council's planning documents. In addition, the public could also respond via email and the Council's Consultation Portal. Copies of the reviewed SCI and response forms were also placed in the Council's Community hubs and local branch libraries. A statutory notice was also placed in the Evening Gazette. This six weeks consultation period ended on the 6 November 2015.

How comments were considered

4. In total the Council received comments from 15 respondents. Of the 15 respondents, 13 respondents supported the reviewed SCI with only two making objections. The comments made by one of the two objectors were in relation to other planning issues, separate to the SCI, which were subsequently dealt with under the Council's Complaints Procedure.
5. It was considered that some of the suggestions made by respondents tended exceed the minimum standard requirements of an SCI, which essentially sets out the 'baseline' level of involvement the community can expect in the decisions taken on planning proposals and the preparation and revision of Development Plans. These additional engagement suggestions however, can be utilised on a case-by-case basis, particularly when consulting on major planning applications and reviewing planning documents, but which do not need to be listed in the SCI. A summary of the comments and the Council's responses in respect of this consultation process are shown below.

Conclusion

6. Following the consultation and received comments, it is not considered necessary to amend the review SCI further, and that it can now proceed to adoption.

Summary of Responses – Statement of Community Involvement – Review Public Consultation

Respondent	Paragraph Number/s	Support/Object	Respondent Comment/ Suggested Change	Suggested Change Accepted/Declined
Hartlepool Borough Council	-	Support	Thank you for consulting Hartlepool Borough Council on your updated Statement of Community Involvement. It is noted that the document makes reference to the Duty to Cooperate and this is supported. There are no further comments we wish to make on this document.	Support welcomed. No further action required.
Environment Agency	-	Support	I can advise that we have no comment to make regarding this.	Support welcomed. No further action required.
Mr D Lawrence Middlesbrough Resident.	-	Support	No further observations made	Support welcomed. No further action required.
S. Pink Middlesbrough Resident	General	Objects	<p>'Hands on Middlesbrough' is a community group which aims to support and promote Middlesbrough's heritage and green spaces. The group formed in 2014, following concerns regarding the Acklam Hall housing & medical village development which arguably put heritage (above and below ground), a conservation area and habitat for wildlife at unnecessary risk, without appropriate care and provision.</p> <p>We revealed a number of flaws in the consultation process when we conducted interviews with members of the local community and researched the methods of consultation and publicity utilised by the Council since 2009/10 when a preferred developer for the site was accepted.</p> <p>'Hands on Middlesbrough' recognise that the SCI identifies a minimum consultation framework, which in most cases does not effectively consult the public in good time.</p> <p>We welcome a review of the current SCI because it gives the local authority an opportunity to make positive changes, which will</p>	<p>Under the statutory planning system there are prescribed consultation periods regarding processing planning applications and plan-making to ensure that the public are consulted in good time. The Council adheres to these timescales and will extend them where appropriate (major developments).</p> <p>A newsletter is not always successful, as some people see them as junk mail, and will bin them before looking at them. In the case of major development proposals those properties</p>

			<p>enable members of the public to get involved in the decision making process and we would suggest that the SCI document describes how community involvement will impact on the decision making process, and any potential outcomes.</p> <p>Hands on Middlesbrough would like to offer our support for a review of this document and give recommendations about how we feel the current consultation process could be made more effective and inclusive.</p> <p>ELECTED MEMBERS, COMMUNITY AND PARISH COUNCILS</p> <p>Historically, it has always been elected members, community and parish councils who are identified as best placed to relay community concerns with regards to planning proposals. Community and Parish councils often use traditional methods to disseminate information; meetings, newsletters, word of mouth and emails to members. These forms of communication can be successful but they are rarely effective in reaching out to a wider audience beyond the community or parish council itself. A newsletter can be successful for reaching those who may not have internet access.</p> <p>The fundamental flaw with this is that despite being regarded as the most effective way to consult the general public, community and parish councils are not representative of the diverse society in which we live. Therefore, they should not be given the sole responsibility of bridging the gap between members of the community and the local authority when consulting on planning proposals or discussing neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The community council, in some cases, can be a politically charged environment. It is not always a comfortable environment for those who find the jargon involved in planning difficult. A more relaxed, informal approach where people can view plans and ask questions is perhaps the way to reach out to members of the</p>	<p>bordering the site will be notified about the proposals, as described in the SCI.</p> <p>Appendix 1 - Methods of Engagement of the draft SCI outlines a variety of engagement methods which the Council will utilise, when appropriate. These methods also include web and social media methods of consultation.</p> <p>Unfortunately, there will be instances where someone will say that they have not been informed about a particular development proposal or plan preparation. In these cases the Council will investigate the complaint and the reasons why that person or persons has/have not been informed.</p> <p>The SCI is designed to enable local authorities to set down a minimum consultation/engagement framework. This minimum framework can then be tailored on a case-by-case basis, to give scope and flexibility to include additional methods of engagement, where appropriate. A more rigid framework will not allow</p>
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		<p>community.</p> <p>Some Middlesbrough wards do not have an active community council who hold regular meetings, so it is unclear how people in these areas get involved in the planning process.</p> <p>EARLY INVOLVMENT</p> <p>The local community should be informed at an early stage through well publicised public meetings, drop in sessions, online communication, such as emails and social media and articles in the local press and media. It is also essential that there is an easily accessible public consultation section of the Middlesbrough Council Website, which links to planning proposals and the Search and Track facility for identifying new developments. We therefore welcome the use of more modern media techniques to make consultation easier and also as a means of communicating with a wider audience.</p> <p>Planning notices give a planning application reference number and a contact, but there is often no description and they are difficult to read due to the small font size used. They are also written in jargon which is difficult to understand and excludes some members of the community.</p> <p>The Love Middlesbrough magazine which goes out to 64,000 people every quarter would be an effective way of offering advice and support to people interested in getting involved in planning. It is recommended that this is used as a vehicle for communicating and consulting on major planning proposals.</p> <p>Since the ward councillors are the first point of contact for a member of the community, it is vital that they are approachable and emails are responded to promptly. If an email is sent to a councillor regarding a development which is not in their ward, then they still need to pass on the email to the councillors who are responsible.</p>	<p>flexibility and become more of a tick-box process, rather than considering who it is being consulted.</p> <p>Comments noted regarding planning notices and 'jargon' used. It should however, be recognised that these notices are statutory and require reference to the Planning Acts and/or Regulations that the proposal falls under. We will investigate whether it is possible reduce the so called 'jargon' on the notices without undermining any legal requirements.</p> <p>An article for the Love Middlesbrough magazine is an interesting idea regarding planning issues, and will be investigated; however, it may not be a suitable vehicle to list planning applications.</p> <p>Comments noted regarding Ward Councillor approachability and communication aspects. This however, is not an issue for the SCI, which is about process. If you do have a complaint about a particular Councillor, or their approachability then you will</p>
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<p>Mrs J. Olley Middlesbrough Resident.</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>Supports</p>	<p>I am not sure how I qualify to receive this form. The SCI Statement is long and involved. If it means local communities will be notified of planning applications, or change of use for premises, within an area which will affect them, regardless of Community Council boundaries, so much the better.</p>	<p>As a resident/stakeholder of Middlesbrough you qualify to receive the response form.</p> <p>Notification letters are sent out to adjoining landowners and occupiers within 3 days of receipt of a planning application. Where there are clear impacts from a proposed development on the near neighbours, then the Council will notify them.</p> <p>Depending on the scale of the development proposal the Council will assess if the notification needs to be wider.</p>

				Additionally, weekly planning application lists can be downloaded from the Council's website or viewed in Public Notices section of the local newspaper.
Mrs J Cook Middlesbrough Resident.	General	Support	If a resident's property has been altered and later applies for further alterations/land please send the updated plan to neighbours/interested parties for comments. Several times Coulby Newham residents have looked at applications or the original plan.	Some minor amendments do not necessarily require a fresh application, and in these cases will not require further consultation. If there are significant amendments made to a proposal then a fresh application will be required, which will entail normal notification and processing procedures.
David Richardson Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	-	Support welcomed No further action required.
Ian Reid Business Owner, Stokesley	-	Support	-	Support welcomed No further action required.
Francis Raymond Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	-	Support welcomed No further action required.
Kelvin Bowes Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	-	Support welcomed No further action required.
Beryl Bird Tees Valley Local Access Forum	-	Support	-	Support welcomed No further action required.

Scarlet Pink Hands on Middlesbrough	-	Support	Community Councils and Parish Councils are no longer representative of the diversity of community. They are not best placed in isolation to inform the wider community about planning applications. Middlesbrough council would be welcomed to inform community groups including Hands on Middlesbrough, so that information be posted on social media (enabling a younger age group to be consulted).I welcome the changes regarding access to information neighbourhood plans and a more inclusive approach.	Appendix 1 - Methods of Engagement of the draft SCI outlines a variety of engagement methods which the Council will utilise, when appropriate. These methods also include web and social media methods of consultation. Also see above S. Pink comments & officer response. Support welcomed No further action required.
Robert Mullen Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	The draft SCI contains one fundamental flaw. Through this draft SCI procedure Middlesbrough Council is obliged to consult with the public on a number of planning matters - the SHLAA, the Local Plan, Housing Masterplans and even bog standard planning applications., But sadly there is no directive included in the Statement to have them genuinely listen to the public. This is something we have faced in Middlesbrough for a long time. This document is elegant but lacking the above requirement.	Support welcomed Comments noted.
Janis McBride Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	Consultation from the council is superficial. Usually a plan seems to have been made by developers, the council approve it and then the public are told of the plan, not in a straightforward way but in a way that will make the plan easier for the public to accept. This isn't consultation, it is persuasion. It is the way that the plan is put to them as the only choice and 'the plan' presented as the only way forward. Consultation is a tick box and it should be much more than that.	Support welcomed. Comments noted.

<p>S. Thompson Middlesbrough Resident</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Object</p>	<p>I sincerely hope that now 1700 people have lost their jobs at British Steel on Teesside that you will revise your planning to build so many new houses. There is no justification for more housing in Teesside. Middlesbrough has a declining population.</p> <p>New houses will sell but leave behind more voids at the end of the chain. Void housing equals crime. We have been there before. There is no incentive for new people to move into our area - there are no new jobs. You have not filled all the available brown field sites and you are proposing to destroy our beautiful countryside with little boxes creating look alike 'Monopoly' housing.</p> <p>How can you refer to community involvement when all you do is bulldoze through needless planning consents in order to receive more revenue through Council Tax. You have not listened to the people in your consultations and not given any consideration to their views.</p> <p>Taylor Wimpey have built houses on Rose Cottage Farm where planning consent was only given for bungalows. These houses need to be pulled down now. Middlesbrough Council has told me in the past that they do not 'sign off' planning permission (unlike building regulations) unless there is a complaint. Well I am complaining now.</p>	<p>The respondent's comments have been dealt with under the Council's complaints procedures.</p> <p>No further action required, as part of the review of the SCI.</p>
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