

Appendix 1 – SCI Consultation: Summary of Main Issues

Question	Summary – main / recurrent issues	Response / action
<p>1 Do you support the core principles for engaging interested parties in the planning service?</p>	<p>Majority of respondents support the stated core principles.</p> <p>Extra principle proposed “Early engagement to enable the community to help shape development and planning policy”.</p> <p>Several parish council’s query the Council’s commitment to real / active community involvement. The intent of the SCI, to meet minimum statutory requirements for consultation, and past practice isn’t seen by some to demonstrate the core principles.</p> <p>Early involvement - at the ideas stage (policy development, pre-app and applications)</p>	<p>Noted. The SCI ensures that the Council can respond nimbly to consultation needs at the time depending on the type of document, and information that needs to be obtained, resources, timescales and the needs of consultees / the community. Importantly it does not preclude the Council from doing more than the minimum where value can be added to the engagement process.</p> <p><i>Add to /amend final sentence of SCI para 5.2.2 to read “The SCI provides a framework for developing the consultation plan for any future Local Plan review. Consultation methods and techniques will vary depending on the stage of plan production. The SCI does not preclude the Council from doing more than the minimum where value can be added to the engagement process. “</i></p> <p><i>Amend SCI para 4.2.2 to insert “early in and at” various stages of its preparation.</i></p>
<p>2 Are there any local groups that you think ought to be on the Council’s contact database?</p>	<p>12 extra types of groups / organisations were suggested, some not currently represented on the contact database, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village hall committees • Post Offices • Sports & social club committees • Parish newsletter groups • Bus network operators • Schools • GP surgeries 	<p>The responsibility for keeping contact details up to date lies with individuals / organisations.</p> <p>Suggested groups will be cross-checked with the contact database. Where necessary they will be approached / encouraged to update or register their details.</p> <p><i>Add sentence to Section 5.1 (after Para 5.1.3) of SCI to read “At the start of each new Local Plan cycle the contact database will be reviewed. Any Communications Plan for a policy document / consultation will consider how to make relevant interested parties aware of the opportunity to be involved and encourage them to register with the portal / contact database, this may involve direct contact or the use of other methods.”</i></p>

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3	<p>How can the Council encourage seldom heard groups to participate in the planning service</p>	<p>Those who responded, suggested the Council should be more proactive, to contact or create new networks and work with representative bodies of seldom heard groups (SHG).</p> <p>Elected councillors and Parish Councils are suggested as conduits for identifying and encouraging the participation of SHG's.</p> <p>Wider use of social media and utilising; village email alerts / social media groups, village notice boards, leaflet drops, and posters was also suggested. Better publicised / targeted drop-in events, a simplified website (for planning) and strategic planning consultation portal were also suggested.</p>	<p>Noted. The SCI allows flexibility in how consultations are carried out, importantly it does not preclude the Council from doing more than the minimum where value can be added to the engagement process.</p> <p>Any Communications Plan for a new Local Plan cycle will identify SHG's and consider how to raise their awareness of the opportunity to get involved and set out how to engage them by using easy and accessible methods.</p> <p>Any renewal / purchase of online consultation software and any review of the planning policy pages on the Council website, will take account of comments made.</p> <p><i>Add sentence to Section 5.2 (Para 5.2.4) of SCI to read; "Any future renewal / purchase of online consultation software will seek to balance the need for technical functionality with simplicity and ease of use by the interested parties."</i></p>
4	<p>How can the Council best support interested parties; particularly statutory bodies, agents & professional parties, to submit representations / comments to consultations online?</p>	<p>Few responded. Suggestions included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not limiting the format of consultation information provided to allow 3rd parties to collate responses from internal stakeholders into a single corporate response. • Reviewing question format to allow comment on issues most relevant to residents • An ability to vary question types – Yes / No and open comments • More user testing of online systems • Making documents quicker, easier to read (less text) • Use of 'rich text' rather than 'plain text' in the consultation portal, to make it easier / more user friendly to read and understand. • Better draft / save function • Ability to submit responses to all consultation questions as 1 form • Drop-in sessions to support / assist use of online consultation system 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Issues raised about the strategic planning portal will be fed back to the system provider. Where it is not possible to improve external software, the reasons will be explained and additional guidance / practical support for users considered.</p> <p>Issues raised will also inform any future decision to procure or develop alternative online consultation software.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to register (on the strategic planning consultation portal) before making comments is a deterrent. <p>Strategic planning consultation portal is viewed as too cumbersome, not simple / accessible or robust enough by some.</p> <p>Planning portal for commenting on planning applications is seen as efficient.</p>	
5	Is the minimum 6-week consultation period sufficient for effective consultation?	<p>Supported by the majority. Several support but suggest the period used should reflect the nature / complexity of the subject matter of the consultation.</p> <p>A minority suggest longer periods ranging from a minimum of 8wks / 40 working days up to 12-wks, and extended periods for complex planning issues (including planning applications) of between 12-26 weeks or longer.</p> <p>Avoiding or extending the length of consultations to reflect main holiday periods is supported. As is the ability to request extensions of time to comment on planning applications.</p> <p>Ensuring notification is given at the start of the period was also encouraged.</p>	Noted.
6	Do you see any issues with a move away from providing Parish Council's with paper copies of plans for planning applications and encouraging online viewing this?	<p>Most respondents support a move away from paper with the caveat that paper copies should be available on request.</p> <p>Reasons for caveat - poor internet coverage, difficulty to view online plans as a group, lack of facilities to print large maps themselves.</p> <p>One party suggests HDC provide A3 size plans & only key documents to parishes.</p>	Noted.
7	Do you support the change to remove names and addresses	Few responses. Several, mainly parish councils suggest that the ward / parish or first part of the postcode should be	Noted.

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	<p>from planning application comments prior to publication?</p>	<p>published. Others suggest that consultees should be asked for permission when submitting comments.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Do you have any other comments on the Statement of Community Involvement?</p>	<p>Key comments related to the SCI include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time periods to respond to complex planning applications is too short – the ability to request / be given an extension of time is valued by parish councils. • Parties affected by planning applications aren't always notified directly. Site notices (viewable only on foot) do not always come to the attention of affected parties. • Publication of information on the website isn't enough - better communication needed. • Active monitoring of the SCI is needed, with feedback mechanisms. • SCI is a good example of an online consultation with in-line responses. • Small businesses make up 97% of all businesses in the district their representative bodies (& they) should have the opportunity to be involved in planning consultations that affect them. <p>Most other comments made are outside the scope of the SCI document, but give helpful feedback and suggestions about planning including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resident's panel and /or a district planning liaison network – to transform the way the council involves interested parties. • Review of 'Call in' process for planning to reinstate 7 objection / support comment rule. • Developments should be carried out as approved, with all conditions met. • Leicestershire should have a CIL, New Homes Bonus should continue to be given to parish councils and 	<p>SCI adheres to regulations on time period. Facility to request extension of time exists.</p> <p>SCI adheres to regulations</p> <p>Para 5.2.6 of SCI provides flexibility, in practice the Council often does more than the minimum required by legislation.</p> <p>Via the EIA for the SCI the Strategic Planning Team is committed to 2 actions in 2020 to explore the means and benefit of collecting data on consultations.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

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		<p>they should have a greater say in the use of Section 106 funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All amendments to planning applications should be consulted upon, what is minor to the case officer may be important to the local community.	
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