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| <b>Subject:</b>           | Statement of Community Involvement |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2016     |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Phil Williams                      |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Dermot O’Kane                      |

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| <b>Is this report restricted?</b>            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Relevant background Information</b>   |
| <b>1.1</b> | A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out when and how the City Council will engage the local community in both the preparation of planning policy and the determination of planning applications.   |
| <b>1.2</b> | Section 4 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (‘the 2011 Act’) places a statutory duty upon the Council to produce an SCI. The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the process by which this should be done.  |
| <b>1.3</b> | These regulations prescribe the form and content of the SCI to be prepared by the Council and the procedures for its preparation and agreement by the Department. The Regulations also make provision that allow a council to carry out a discretionary public consultation on the SCI if it so wishes.  |
| <b>1.4</b> | The 12 week public consultation exercise on the draft Statement of Community Involvement was facilitated by means of a consultation exercise from which the Development Planning and Policy Team received eleven responses. The public consultation exercise attracted responses from a wide range of interests. Two responses were from Local Government interests; six responses were from the community/academia sectors; one response was from an individual and two responses were from businesses. |
| <b>1.5</b> | This report is broken into themes of the SCI being the preparation of the LDP and Community Plan, Development Management, Planning Enforcement and community involvement in Conservation Area and Simplified Planning Zone designation.  |

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| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
| <b>2.1</b> | <p>The purpose of community consultation process is to ensure that people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Have access to information about how their area will develop;</li> <li>(ii) Put forward their own ideas about how their area develops and feel confident that there is a process for those ideas to be considered;</li> <li>(iii) Have an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of the area and have it considered before decisions are made;</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2.2</b> | <p>In its broadest sense it is intended that we adopt a proactive and timely approach to community involvement through a process of providing clear information and encourage participation during plan preparation and planning application submission, assessment and determination. The process must therefore be informative, user friendly, as inclusive as possible and conducted in an open and transparent way. Every effort is to be made to engage the community, record views and provide feedback.</p>  |
| <b>2.3</b> | <p>Good practice in community involvement embraces a wide range of activities and these depend on the purpose for which consultation is being undertaken and who is being consulted.</p>  |
| <b>2.4</b> | <p><u>Preparation of the Local Development Plan and Community Plan</u><br/> Community consultation is an important element of preparing a draft Local Development Plan. A local development plan is made at different stages, each presenting opportunities for community involvement.</p>  |
| <b>2.5</b> | <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will inform the general public and all stakeholders of how, where and when they can become involved in the local development plan preparation process and the timescale for doing so. The indicative timeline for the LDP process as detailed in legislation and will set out the key stages and broad timing of the plan process and will commence when it is published by Belfast City Council. The SCI and timetable for the Plan will be published together.</p>  |
| <b>2.6</b> | <p>Each stage is identified with the actions that are to be taken to involve the community. As most of the respondents to the draft SCI had views of who should be included as consultees the Planning Section will set up a database of stakeholders for community involvement. The format of community engagement will be established as the LDP plan process evolves and the community will be made aware of public events through public notices. The actions will fulfil and in some cases exceed the statutory requirements on public consultation.</p> |
| <b>2.7</b> | <p>Advice has been taken with internal communications to ensure that the SCI is clearly communicated and accessible in alternative formats and minority languages.</p>  |
| <b>2.8</b> | <p>The SCI outlines how the Council will engage with the community in preparing the Belfast Agenda and the involvement that has been undertaken within the Belfast</p>  |

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|             | <p>Conversation programme of engagement. The LDP is a spatial representation of the Community Plan.</p>  |
| <b>2.9</b>  | <p>To ensure transparency and accountability the local development plan is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment and SA. Independent examinations by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) will determine the soundness of the draft plan strategy and local policies plan and dates, times and venues for this examination will be made known.</p> |
|             | <p><u>Development Management</u></p>   |
| <b>2.10</b> | <p>In the case of determining planning applications, the SCI will encourage pre-application discussions for a range of types of applications, both major such as large housing, industrial or retail and local such as house extensions or advertisements.</p>   |
| <b>2.11</b> | <p>During the application stage the SCI details how the Council will involve the Community in the decision making process, through statutory advertising and neighbour notification and how details may be obtained. It will outline how files can be inspected and advises on how comments may be submitted and how we engage.</p>  |
| <b>2.12</b> | <p>The SCI provides details on community involvement at the Planning Committee stage as well as other councils procedures after the application has been determined.</p>   |
|             | <p><u>Planning Enforcement</u></p>   |
| <b>2.13</b> | <p>The SCI outlines the main areas of community involvement in planning enforcement and the Council encourage individuals to report cases or raise with elected members possible breaches of planning control. A schedule of enforcement powers may be addressed in forthcoming Enforcement Strategy.</p>  |
|             | <p><u>Other Designations</u></p>   |
| <b>2.14</b> | <p>Community involvement in Conservation Area and Simplified Planning Zone designations are also outlined.</p>   |
| <b>2.15</b> | <p>The SCI details with who the Council will undertake consultation and where there is cause to hold an independent examination the dates, times and venues for this examination will be made known.</p>   |
| <b>3.0</b>  | <p><b>Resource Implications</b></p>  |
| <b>3.1</b>  | <p>This is a new element of work for the Planning Service and the impact of additional workload involved will be kept under review.</p>  |
| <b>4.0</b>  | <p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications</b></p>  |
| <b>4.1</b>  | <p>The SCI has been developed in line with the Council's equality and good relations frameworks and policies.</p>  |

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| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| <b>5.1</b> | Members are asked to note and approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the attached amended SCI.</li><li>• that the amended SCI be submitted to the Department of the Environment for its agreement.</li></ul> |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Documents Attached</b>  |
| <b>6.1</b> | Appendix 1<br>Statement of Community Involvement.  |