

## **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.	<b>Support welcomed.</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
Environment Agency	-	Support	I can advise that we have no comment to make regarding this.	<b>Support welcomed.</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
Mr D Lawrence Middlesbrough Resident.	-	Support	No further observations made	<b>Support welcomed.</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
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 &amp; 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</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</p>

		<p>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 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><b>ELECTED MEMBERS, COMMUNITY AND PARISH COUNCILS</b></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>at them. In the case of major development proposals those properties 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</p>
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			<p>confidence in the planning system.</p> <p>One reason for a loss of confidence in the planning system is due to a lack of transparency. Some meetings regarding the sale of land for development take place without the public or press present. This creates feelings of mistrust towards those who are supposed to represent the community as some people feel they are excluded from the consultation process.</p> <p>A way to regain that trust is by setting out the ways in which public views will be listened to and acted upon. The review of the consultation process is welcomed but once the public have been consulted it is not clear how these views will be taken into consideration when making planning decisions.</p> <p>If a large majority of public opinion is against a particular development proposal how can the public be confident that their opinions will be listened to and acted upon?</p> <p>Hands on Middlesbrough would like to be directly consulted on future planning proposals and will disseminate that information via social media and other means.</p> <p>It is also a recommendation that Middlesbrough Borough Council puts together a diverse advisory board of proactive local people (including young people and hard-to-reach groups) and consults with them directly on a month by month basis.</p>	<p>does take on board their comments. Unfortunately, their views can sometimes fall outside the Government's legislative planning framework, and/or the adopted Local Plan which can give the impression that local communities are not being listened to.</p> <p>The SCI seeks to set down minimum guidelines of how the Council will meet its consultation/engagement obligations and how local communities can respond to development proposals or planning policy documents.</p> <p>All comments are considered and form part of a range of 'material considerations' when deciding planning applications or during the plan-making process.</p> <p>The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that 'there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, unless material considerations</p>
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				<p>indicate otherwise'.</p> <p>The Council does not directly (apart from Statutory consultees) consult on future planning proposals. It does however, publish a list applications in the local newspaper and prepares a weekly list of planning applications, which can be downloaded from the Council's website at:  <a href="http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk">www.middlesbrough.gov.uk</a></p> <p>In respect of the community advisory panel the Council is not in a position to resource this activity, given current financial constraints. This does not prevent groups like 'Hands On Middlesbrough' from submitting their comments on planning applications through existing consultation methods.</p> <p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>No further action required, as part of the review of the SCI.</b></p>
Mrs J. Olley Middlesbrough Resident.	General	Supports	I am not sure how I qualify to receive this form. The SCI Statement is long and involved. If it means local communities will	As a resident/stakeholder of Middlesbrough you qualify to

			<p>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>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> <p>Additionally, weekly planning application lists can be downloaded from the Council's website or viewed in Public Notices section of the local newspaper.</p>
<p>Mrs J Cook Middlesbrough Resident.</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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</p>

				processing procedures.
David Richardson Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	-	<b>Support welcomed</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
Ian Reid Business Owner, Stokesley	-	Support	-	<b>Support welcomed</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
Francis Raymond Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	-	<b>Support welcomed</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
Kelvin Bowes Middlesbrough Resident	-	Support	-	<b>Support welcomed</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
Beryl Bird Tees Valley Local Access Forum	-	Support	-	<b>Support welcomed</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>
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.  <b>Support welcomed</b>  <b>No further action required.</b>

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.	<b>Support welcomed</b> <b>Comments noted.</b>
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.	<b>Support welcomed.</b> <b>Comments noted.</b>

<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><b>No further action required, as part of the review of the SCI.</b></p>
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