



**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel  November 19 <sup>th</sup> 2013	<b>Item Number:</b>	
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<b>Title:</b>	Community Engagement with Planning – Scoping Report
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<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	Cllr Stuart McNamara, Chair of Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b> All	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:</b>
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**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

- 1.1 As part of its work programme for 2013/14, the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel agreed to assess how planning services involved local residents and engaged local communities. The following provides a scope of the planned work (aims, objectives and work plan) to be discussed and agreed by the panel.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

- 2.1 This is not applicable at this stage. The relevant Cabinet Member will introduce a response to any report or recommendations that result from this work at the appropriate juncture.

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel note contents of the attached scoping report and agree the aims, objectives and work plan contained within it.

**4. Other options considered**

- 4.1 This topic was selected by the panel after consultation with local stakeholders (local residents, community groups, members and officers).

**5. Background information**

- 5.1 Under the agreed terms of reference, Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel can assist the Council and the Cabinet in its budgetary and policy framework through conducting in depth analysis of local policy issues.
- 5.2 In this context, the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel may:
- Review the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
  - Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
  - Make recommendations to the Cabinet or relevant nonexecutive Committee arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.
- 5.3 Cabinet Members, senior officers and other stakeholders were consulted in the development of an outline work programme for Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels. An assessment of community engagement practices used in within the planning service was agreed to be included within the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel work programme by the Committee at its meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2013.

## **6. Community engagement with planning service**

### Introduction

- 6.1 A review of the Development Management Function within Haringey Council was undertaken in May 2012. This review encompassed all service aspects including the planning process, service performance, leadership and customer service. As a result of this evaluation, a Development Management Improvement Programme was established which is being monitored and overseen by Regulatory Committee.
- 6.2 As part of its work programme for 2013/14, the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel agreed to undertake an assessment of how the local planning service engages and involves local communities. In particular, the panel agreed to assess Haringey's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and to undertake a comparative assessment with other Local Planning Authorities.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that the work of the panel will contribute to the Development Management Improvement Programme and the further development of community engagement policies and practices in operation within the planning service in Haringey.

### Background

- 6.4 It is broadly acknowledged that community involvement is key factor in the delivery of good planning outcomes as this can help to empower individuals and communities to play an active role in shaping the community in which they live. Furthermore, community engagement within planning processes can:
- Help to identify local needs;
  - Inform policy development;
  - Provide evaluative feedback on local projects and plans; and
  - Develop a sense of local ownership and civic pride.

- 6.5 Evaluative studies<sup>1</sup> have highlighted a number of significant challenges that Local Planning Authorities experience in engaging and involving local communities in local planning processes, including:
- Costs for participation and running involvement exercises;
  - The complexity of the planning issues under consideration
  - Reaching hard to reach or seldom heard communities such as young people and older people;
  - Planning is often perceived as a remote bureaucratic process which does not encourage involvement;
  - Language of planning, with technical expressions and jargon can be a deterrent to involvement;
  - Perception that planning consultation is dominated by highly vocalised local interest groups.

#### Community involvement in planning at the local level

- 6.6 There is an extensive legislative framework in place which governs community involvement in planning. There are statutory requirements for making information available about development plans and planning applications to ensure that local people can make appropriate representations on plans and planning applications.
- 6.7 The planning process is process driven, and planners need inputs from the public at certain points in plan making to ensure that statutory requirements are met. There are two categories of consultation at the local level:
- Local plan making process: each Local Planning Authority (LPA) is responsible for the preparation of Local Development Documents which make up the Local Development Framework (LDF).
  - Development Management: This is the decision-making process for planning applications.
- 6.8 A summary of the key local planning processes in which public consultation is sought are outlined in Appendix A.

#### Statements of Community Involvement

- 6.9 Local Planning Authorities are statutorily required to develop a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This is a document that sets out the framework for how the Local Planning Authority will engage with the public in preparing Local Development Plans in plan making and in commenting on planning applications.
- 6.10 The aim of the SCI is to set out the ways (e.g. how and when) the Local Planning Authority will consult on planning decisions and the plan making process. More specifically however, the SCI should encourage and support 'front loading' where consultation with the public begins at the earliest stages of each document's development to ensure that communities are given the fullest opportunity to participate in planning processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning and Community Involvement A guide to effective S106 agreements and Statements of Community Involvement Town and Country Planning Association (with The Rayne Foundation & Ethical property Foundation)

- 6.11 The SCI sets out a framework of minimum standards for community involvement standards that the Local Planning Authority will comply with in local planning processes. National guidance<sup>2</sup> issued in 2008 to Local Planning Authorities for the development of SCIs indicates that these should include:
- A clear explanation of the process and methods for community involvement for different types of documents (e.g. Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance) and how diverse sections of community involved;
  - Those community groups that need to be involved at different stages of the process;
  - An explanation of the process and methods for effective community involvement in determining of planning applications;
  - Details of the Local Planning Authorities approach to pre applications discussions;
  - Details of the Local Planning Authorities approach to community involvement in planning obligations;
  - Information on how the SCI will be monitored, evaluated and scrutinised at the local level;
  - Details of where community groups can get further information on the planning process (e.g. Planning Aid).
  - How landowners and developer interests will be engaged.

- 6.12 National guidance has since been updated through the National Planning Policy Framework,<sup>3</sup> which emphasises the importance of early and meaningful engagement in planning processes:

*'Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made.'*

- 6.13 Evaluative studies amongst community groups as to what makes an effective SCI have identified the following characteristics:
- Clear, written in plain English
  - Clarity about the SCI and its role
  - Practicality and usability: use of simple summaries, provision of examples (e.g. site notices, neighbour notifications)
  - Detail priorities and resources available for community involvement
  - Clear explanation of how the SCI will influence policy development
  - Engage with the whole community especially hard for each or seldom heard groups.

#### Local Context

- 6.14 Haringey SCI (was initially adopted in 2007, but has since been updated in 2011). The SCI and the methods and processes of community involvement proposed within aim to reflect local demography and needs of local residents and communities. In

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<sup>2</sup> Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Spatial Planning DCLG 2008

<sup>3</sup> National Planning Policy Framework DCLG 2012

addition, the SCI has been developed with reference to other key strategies and policy documents:

- Haringey Council Consultation Strategy: which sets out the guiding principles of how the Council will engage with local people;
- Haringey COMPACT: an agreement between voluntary, community and statutory organisations on how they intend to engage and work with each other;
- Council Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.15 As part of the plan making process, public consultation that were carried are assessed against the SCI during the public examination of plans. Haringey's Core Strategy (now called the Local Plan Strategic policies) were found sound by the Planning Inspector who carried out the examination in Public including compliance with the SCI.

6.16 Together with other customer service functions, Haringey SCI was assessed as part of an external review of the Development Management Function.<sup>4</sup> It was concluded from this assessment that:

- There was a broad range of written guidance on the development management process available on and off line;
- That service standards in customer charter and SCI were not clear, were not monitored or reported upon;
- There could be further improvement in the way neighbours and objectors are given clear, timely information about proposals and amendments.

6.17 Haringey SCI is contained in Appendix B.

## **7. Aims, objectives and outcomes of scrutiny involvement**

### Aim

7.1 The work of the EHSP has an overarching aim:

*'To assess whether residents and communities have appropriate opportunities to engage meaningfully in local planning processes through community engagement and involvement strategies within the planning service (with particular reference to the Statement of Community Involvement).'*

### Objectives

7.2 It is suggested that there are a number of component objectives within this overarching aim which the panel will seek to address during its investigation, these being:

#### *Local Policy and Practice*

1. To assess how effectively planning service engages and supports meaningful community involvement in planning developments and decision making?
  - To describe the nature and scope of community consultation;
  - To describe the community engagement and consultation standards and how these are measured, monitored and published;

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<sup>4</sup> Development Management (DM) Diagnostic review – Haringey Council 2013 (Regulatory Committee)

- The assess the adequacy of consultation lists, that they are up to date and reflect the demography of the local community;
  - Ensuring that hard to reach groups or seldom heard groups sufficiently engaged;
  - Assess the Haringey Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and make recommendations for development / improvement;
  - The role of community engagement in Development Management Forums in larger scale planning applications;
  - Assess whether there is appropriate education and training among local community groups to support engagement with local planning process;
  - That appropriate use of digital, new technology and social media is used to engage and involve local residents and communities with planning development processes;
2. To assess the role of members in community engagement, and consider ways in which they can be engaged in the pre-application process.
  3. Assess how recent legislative changes in the planning sector have (or will) impact on community engagement processes and are reflected in local arrangements?
    - Localism Act, Neighbourhood Planning (Plans), Community Infrastructure Levy
  5. To assess community perceptions of local engagement and involvement within the planning process?
    - Community assessments of local engagement infrastructure;
    - Community expectations.

#### *Comparative Policy and Practice*

1. To assess community engagement and involvement infrastructure and resources at other Local Planning Authorities (in London) which may inform policy and practice in Haringey.
2. To assess the Statement of Community Involvement of other Local Planning Authorities which may further inform the future development of the Haringey SCI?
3. To identify and consult specialist planning agencies to help identify good or innovative practice for local community engagement and planning which may be replicated in Haringey?

#### *Other*

1. Asses the role of statutory consultees (fire, police etc), their responses and authorisation of planning applications.
2. Identify the protocols and procedures for determining which planning applications are considered at Planning Committee or determined by officers under delegated authority.
3. Ascertain the nature, function and membership of the design panel and how this supports the planning process.
4. Assess the use of factsheets to support compliance with shop frontage regulations.

#### Outcomes

- 7.3 It is expected that there will be three outcomes from the above work of the panel:
- Provide an assessment of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and assess ways in which public engagement can be improved in the future both in plan making and applications. This may contribute to SCI updates and the review can also be reported at the next available service Monitoring Report.
  - Provide comparative assessments of other community engagement processes within other Local Planning Authorities that may guide and inform policy and practice locally.
  - Contribute to the overall Development Management Improvement Programme and consider ways in which members can be engaged in the pre-application process in compliance with the Localism Act (2012).

## 8. Scrutiny work plan

- 8.1 A range of information gathering methods will be employed to ensure that Members of the panel have access to evidence necessary to assist them in investigation of under occupancy in the social rented sector. This will include:
- Desk based reviews (local policy and performance data);
  - Formal panel meeting (to hear evidence from officers and to coordinate work programme)
  - Informal evidence gathering sessions (with local stakeholders and other informed agencies);
  - Primary data collection (among those involved in community planning exercises).
- 8.2 It is anticipated that a range of stakeholders will be involved in this project including the following:

Community	Local Policy & Practice	Comparative Policy & Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Haringey Planning Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other Local Authorities (Hackney, Camden, Islington, K and C, Westminster)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conservation Groups</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Aid for London</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Residents</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Town and Country Planning Association</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning Advisory Service</li> </ul>

- 8.3 The following table depicts the suggested plan of work for the panel.

Stage	Aim	Purpose / Activity	Time line
1.	Scoping	A. Meeting with AD Planning	July- October 2013
2.	Local Policy & Practice	A. Panel Meeting with Officers - <b>Planning Officers</b> B. Evidence / Report from Planning Service C. Assessment of Haringey Statement of Community Involvement (Planning)	November 2013
3.	Comparative Policy and	A. Evidence from other planning officers in other London boroughs	

	Practice	- Assessment the Statement of Community Involvement of other boroughs. - <b>Hackney, Camden, Islington, K and C, Westminster</b> B. Other informed agencies: - <b>Planning Aid For London</b> - <b>Town and Country Planning Assoc.</b> - <b>Planning Advisory Service</b>	December 2013/ January 2014
4.	Community feedback on current process	A. Involvement of those consulted in recent decisions? B. Survey? C. Case Studies?	November 2013 to January 2014
5.	Reporting	A. Interim findings in January (with Cabinet Member) B. Final report to Panel meeting in February 2014	February 2014

## 9. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer and Financial Implications

9.1 It is assumed that any costs associated with this review can be contained within existing budgets for Scrutiny functions, this would include any costs of consultation events or surveys. If there are any costs associated with the recommendations of these panels these will need to be highlighted at the appropriate time for funding to be identified.

## 10. Head of Legal Services and Legal Implications

10.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on this Report. The aims, objectives and work plan are within the remit of the Panel.

## 11. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

11.1 Overview and scrutiny has a strong community engagement role and aims to regularly involve local stakeholders, including residents, in its work. It seeks to do this through:

- Helping to articulate the views of members of the local community and their representatives on issues of local concern
- As a means of bringing local concerns to the attention of decision makers and incorporate them into policies and strategies
- Identified and engages with hard to reach groups
- Helping to develop consensus by seeking to reconcile differing views and developing a shared view of the way forward
- The evidence generated by scrutiny involvement helps to identify the kind of services wanted by local people
- It promotes openness and transparency; all meetings are held in public and documents are available to local people.

11.2 A number of engagement processes will be used to support the work of the Environment & Housing Scrutiny Panel which will seek to include a broad representation from local stakeholders. It is expected that any equalities issues identified within the consultation processes will be highlighted and addressed in the conclusions and recommendations reached by the panel.

## **12. Head of Procurement Comments**

12.1 Not applicable.

## **13. Policy Implications**

13.1 It is intended that the work of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel will contribute and add value to the work of the Council and its partners in meeting locally agreed priorities. In this context, it is expected that the work of the Panel may contribute to improved policy and practice in the following corporate priorities:

- **Opportunities for all:** drive economic growth in which everyone can participate
- **A better council:** ensure that the Council works in a customer focused way

## **14. Use of Appendices**

14.1 Any appendices are listed at the end of the report:

## **15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

## **Appendix A – Planning Framework and opportunities for community involvement in planning<sup>5</sup>**

### **National Planning Policy**

- Wider stakeholder involvement in the preparation of draft policy statements and guidance.
- Government White papers on policy proposals issued for public consultation.
- Planning Policy Statements and other guidance documents issued in draft for public consultation.
- Draft regulations issued for public consultation.

### **Regional Spatial Strategies (as supported by Mayor of London)**

- Focus group on project plan for RSS revision.
- Focus groups of stakeholders, consultation seminars and other opportunities to be involved in emerging issues and options for draft RSS revision.
- Formal opportunities to make representations when draft revision of RSS is submitted to the Secretary of State.
- Examination in public into the draft RSS revision.
- Opportunities to make representations on changes to the RSS revisions proposed by the Secretary of State.

### **Local Development Documents (as supported by Local Planning Authority)**

- Statement of Community Involvement sets out the Local Planning Authority's policy on involving the community in the preparation of its Local Development Documents.
- Early dialogue on LDDs, in line with the SCI.
- Before draft proposals are finalised, the authority will formally publish its preferred options for consultation and must consider representations.
- Draft Development Plan Documents are published and submitted for public examination. Representations can be made, to be considered at the examination.
- Those making representations seeking changes to a DPD will have a right to appear in person at the examination.
- Inspector's report will be made available for public inspection.
- Annual monitoring report published by local authority.

### **Planning Applications (as supported by Local Planning Authority)**

- The SCI will set out the LPA's proposals for consulting the community on planning applications.
- Third parties can make representations on planning applications.
- Objectors can speak at planning committee meetings at the discretion of the LPA.
- Reasons for decisions are published.
- Third parties can make representations on appeals and at inquiries into called in applications.
- Additional consultation with regional and national bodies where appropriate for Major Infrastructure Projects.

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<sup>5</sup> Community Involvement in Planning: the Governments objectives Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2004)