

Summary of Key Issues: Responses to Draft Statement of Community Involvement (March 2012)

(South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council)

The Draft Statement of Community Involvement was published for a formal six week period of consultation from 4th November - 16th December 2012. A summary of the key issues raised through the consultation is provided in the table below.

Rep.ID	Para.no	Respondent	Summary of key issues	Council's response
SCI 1	3.1	R Downing	Supports inclusion of 'options' under Engage section and explaining decisions in 'Feedback' section so community understand Council's decisions about preferred options. Suggests a simple scoring system based on planning criteria.	Comments noted. The Council has a system whereby all proposals and policies are assessed to consider development against a range of planning criteria . This is done through a process called a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (refer to Glossary of Terms). The SA cannot form part of the SCI but will be prepared alongside all development plans produced by the Council.
SCI 2		SWW	No comments.	No changes.
SCI 3		CCD (Greg Davies)	No mention of neighbourhood planning, Localism, empowering local communities. SCI should describe how it compliments neighbourhood planning.	Agreed. Document amended to include reference to these. Amendments have been made to Foreword and Chapter 3 (para 3.1).
SCI 4		Ministry of Justice	No comments beyond commitment to developing their own partnership working with wider community.	No changes.
SCI 5		Cllr Musgrave	Draft SCI covers main issues and the illustrated 6 main stages provides a well structured process. Concern about lack of reference to 'Plan-It' and/or parish & neighbourhood planning.	Agreed. Document amended to include reference to these. Amendments have been made to Foreword and Chapter 3 (para 3.1).
SCI 6		Mr& Mrs Doidge	Support involvement of local councils as they provide local contact and knowledge.	No changes.

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SCI 7		Peter Burgess DWT	No comments.	No changes.

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SCI 8		Natural England (David Westbrook)	Recognises value of community involvement in planning decisions but has no specific comments.	No changes.
SCI 9		Yealmpton Parish Council	No suggested changes but questions necessity of this consultation process.	The Council is required to prepare an up to date and fit for purpose SCI to ensure that community engagement throughout the planning process is undertaken in line with the latest planning regulations. In doing this, we are using the opportunity to find better and more effective ways of involving communities in planning in the future and this consultation exercise is an important part of that process.
SCI 10		Eric Adams	Concern community has previously not been consulted on development options suggested by third parties, (particularly during formal consultation periods).	Comments noted. Documented amended to include reference to this in the Feedback section of the SCI (para 3.2.). Options for development submitted at the Engage stage of the plan-making process will be made publicly available.
SCI 11		Devon Gardens Trust	Supports SCI and commitment to involving community in planning.	No change.
SCI 11	3.1	Devon Gardens Trust	Request that Devon Gardens Trust are added to consultation database.	Consultee has been added to database.

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SCI 11	3.2	Devon Gardens Trust	SA should give due weight to protection and enhancement of heritage assets.	The comments relating to the SA cannot be addressed in the SCI but will be noted for future work.
SCI 11	4.1	Devon Gardens Trust	Proposed variations to Tree Preservation Orders should be included in the published weekly lists of planning applications.	To be arranged.

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SCI 11	4.2	Devon Gardens Trust	The Trust and other non- statutory consultees should be added to consultation database for planning applications.	This would be difficult due to issues around how much weight comments from these bodies would be given, how a list of these organisations would be compiled, kept up-to-date and accurate and how decisions would be made as to which applications needed to be consulted with which non-statutory consultees. No change.
SCI 12		Network Rail (Barbara Morgan)	No specific comments but request National Rail are consulted on any planning applications that have an impact upon a level crossing or are adjacent to their property.	Network Rail is consulted when an application has an impact on a level crossing. No change.
SCI 13		Kingsbridge TC (Martin Johnson)	Comments support SCI.	No changes.

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SCI 14		Newton and Noss Parish Council	SCI makes minimal changes to current practice which works reasonably well. Pre-application discussions – parish councils should be informed as part of the pre-app process. Discussions solely between the District/Borough Council and developers run contrary to the localism agenda.	We encourage developers to have early discussions with Town and Parish Councils. They are also formally invited to join the Council's design panel where proposals impact on their area (NB: not on all applications in their area) where they can contribute to discussions. No change.
SCI 15	2.1	Devon County Council	The draft SCI does not include a list of community organisations to be consulted. If a list is to be included, specific groups with an interest in the historic environment should be included.	Comments noted. Reference to non-statutory organisations and interest groups has been included in para 2.1.
SCI 15		Devon County Council	The document should explain that the County Council is responsible for minerals and waste planning which is covered in DCCs SCI.	Agreed. Document amended to include reference to this in Chapter 3.

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SCI 16	2.1	South Pool Parish Council	There should be a scale regarding the weight of input from individuals and groups in the community with greater weight given to the community/elected representatives than those with commercial interests. Feedback from elected councillors should be prioritised.	The Councils have a duty to consult it's statutory consultees and the local community in all plans it prepares. This process requires the Council to take all planning considerations into account regardless of who the representation is made by. No change.

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SCI 16	2.3	South Pool Parish Council	The commitments should be regularly measured.	When plans are prepared, we will prepare a statement saying how the requirements of the SCI have been met. Reference to this has been included in the 'Plan' section in para. 3.2.
SCI 16	3.1	South Pool Parish Council	There should be more detail on how Parish Councils will be linked more effectively.	Reference is made to how town and parish councils will be consulted in the 'Engage' stage. More guidance about how communities can get involved in preparing their own plans will be provided separately to the SCI at a later date.
SCI 16	3.1	South Pool Parish Council	Maximum response times should be set with regard to correspondence and submissions by individuals and organisations.	This is already done through standard consultation process. The minimum period is usually six weeks. No change.
SCI 16	4	South Pool Parish Council	Any pre-application discussions should be recorded and made available.	Pre-application discussions are confidential because they can be commercially sensitive. However, reference to them and their outcomes are incorporated in Officer delegated reports where preapplication discussions result in an application being submitted.
SCI 17		Stoke Fleming Parish Council	Draft SCI meets the needs and wishes of Stoke Fleming communities.	No change.

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SCI 18	4.1	Woodland Trust	Woodland Trust should be listed as a non-statutory consultee for all applications affecting the irreplaceable semi-natural habitat of ancient woodland.	This would be difficult due to issues around how much weight comments from these bodies would be given, how a list of these organisations would be compiled, kept up-to-date and accurate and how decisions would be made as to which applications needed to be consulted with which non-statutory consultees. No change.
SCI 19		North Tawton Town Council	The Council is concerned that there is a lack of consideration between the planning department and other responsible authorities to make sure infrastructure is considered alongside new housing.	The Councils work closely with other service and infrastructure providers to help ensure that development is supported by appropriate improvements to infrastructure and facilities. The SCI has been amended to include reference to this and the Duty to Co-operate in para.2.2. of the SCI.
SCI 20		The Theatres Trust	No comment	No change.
SCI 21		MABRAKE Action Group	Request a meeting with WDBC planners re. Renewable Energy strategy	A meeting will be arranged with the group to discuss their concerns. No change.
SCI 21		MABRAKE Action Group	Pre-application/scoping meetings should involve community consultation	Community consultation is discussed at the scoping meeting, including the type and scale that will be appropriate for the application. No change.
SCI 22		South Brent Parish Council	Supports and approves the draft SCI	No change.

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SCI 23	3.1	Ivybridge Town Council	The document could state that when holding public exhibitions we will give proper consideration to when and where we hold them and how we promote them.	Agreed. Document amended in the 'Engage' section (para.3.2) to include reference to when community events should be held.

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SCI 23	3.1	Ivybridge Town Council	The document could state how we are going to promote the planning consultation database	Agreed. Document amended in the 'Inform' section (para.3.2) to include reference to how people can add themselves to the database.
SCI 23	3.1	Ivybridge Town Council	Documents needs to reference the Localism Act and the potential for communities to write their own plans. Document could say how the LPA will help/advise with this.	Agreed. Document amended to include reference to these. Amendments have been made to Foreword and Chapter 3 (para 3.1). Further guidance to be provided at a later date outside of the SCI process regarding community/neighbourhood planning.
SCI 24	3.1	Stoke Gabriel Parish Council	'Monitoring regularly' is a loose definition – should a set period of time be quoted?	It is difficult to specify in this document a set monitoring period as all plans will differ. However the Councils produce a monitoring report annually to look at the effectiveness of it's policies and proposals overall. No change.
SCI 24		Stoke Gabriel Parish Council	Sustainability Appraisals should be prepared with involvement from local parish to avoid inaccuracies.	The document states that the SA will be made available for public comment alongside plans that are published . Better front loading in the 'Engage' stage will help to make sure that community issues and knowledge is reflected in the SA.

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SCI 24		Stoke Gabriel Parish Council	West Devon practice of sending letters to each adjoining household should be extended into South Hams	Since 1993 South Hams have advertised all applications in the local paper and put a site notice up on the site rather than notifying individual neighbours. Although challenged soon after the implementation no ombudsman complaints have been upheld giving us confidence that the process South Hams are using is sound.
SCI 25		Alex Mettler	It would be worth asking those present at the early workshops whether the summary reflected their views	The Summary of Early Consultation was sent to all those that attended the workshops to ensure this accurately reflected their views.

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SCI 25	2.3	Alex Mettler	Do not agree that the community should 'lead the way' – community should make its views known and officers and members should make decisions.	Wording of Commitments was developed by South Hams and West Devon Elected Members and reflects their desire to see communities taking a bigger role in plan making.
SCI 25		Alex Mettler	Define "sustainability"	Agreed. Document amended to include Glossary of Terms.
SCI 25	3.3/4.4	Alex Mettler	Planning committee members may not be best placed to comment on heritage applications	Members on the Planning Committee receive planning training and we continue to review their specific training needs.
SCI 25	4.1	Alex Mettler	Best attention should be given to pinpointing the building to which the application applies. Site notices should be taken down once they are out of date.	The Councils expect the address of the application to accurately refer to the site when submitted.

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SCI 25	4.1	Alex Mettler	The way the WDBC website displays comments from the community and statutory consultees needs looking at.	A review of the websites is being undertaken jointly across both Councils and will include looking into improvements to the planning pages. These comments will be fed into this review.
SCI 25	4.2	Alex Mettler	Pre-application discussions should be documented and 'signed off' by both parties	This cannot be done as all Officer advice given at the pre-application stage is given without prejudice.
SCI 25	4.3	Alex Mettler	Community should not be relied on to raise points requiring enforcement action – this is responsibility of Local Planning Authority.	Comments noted. Document amended to reflect sources of information regarding enforcement action in para 4.3.
SCI 25	4.4	Alex Mettler	Reasons for planning decisions are not always explained.	Information, including Officer reports, Letters of Representation etc. are available on the Councils websites until the decision is issued. After this, copies of such information can be requested, preferably by email.
SCI 26		Helen Kummer	SCI lacks a glossary of terms (e.g. public register)	Document has been amended to include a Glossary of Terms

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SCI 26		Helen Kummer	There is no commitment to provide details of planning applications online	A review of the websites is being undertaken jointly across both Councils and will include looking into improvements to the planning pages. These comments will be fed into this review.
SCI 26		Helen Kummer	There is no guidance on how new legislation relating to localism and the NPPF influences the SCI.	Document amended to include reference to these. Amendments have been made to Foreword and Chapter 3 (para 3.1).

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SCI 27	2.2	Plymouth City Council	Suggest change wording of final commitment to “will consider everyone’s views”	Amendment made as suggested.
SCI 27	3.1	Plymouth City Council	In “Feedback section” suggest changing ‘addressed’ to ‘considered’	Amendment made as suggested.
SCI 27	3.1	Plymouth City Council	In “Plan” and “Examine” stages suggest changing “where necessary” to “where appropriate”	Amendment made as suggested.
SCI 27	1.2	Plymouth City Council	The document could provide more explanation about why document is being prepared jointly	This is explained in para.1.2.
SCI 27	2.1	Plymouth City Council	There could be more clarity around who the cultural groups are	Amendment made as suggested - para.2.1.
SCI 27	4	Plymouth City Council	There could be more explanation about alignment of practices – will the SCI be revised to update this?	Document amended to explain how an alignment of Development Management practices will be managed - see Section 4.
SCI 27		Plymouth City Council	There is no mention of Equality Impact Assessments	Document amended to include reference to Equality Impact Assessment in the 'Plan' stage, para.3.2.
SCI 28		Andrew Thompson	To be effective, the SCI must be implemented and staff and councillors will need training to do this.	The Council is committed to working effectively with our communities and is putting practices in place to ensure the commitments of the SCI are implemented.

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SCI 28		Andrew Thompson	WDBC website needs improving and the way objection letters relate to applications is confusing.	A review of the websites is being undertaken jointly across both Councils and will include looking into improvements to the planning pages. These comments will be fed into this review.
SCI 29		Michael Dennis	How is the SCI monitored?	When plans are prepared, we will prepare a statement saying how the requirements of the SCI have been met. Reference to this has been included in the 'Plan' section in para. 3.2.
SCI 30		Harberton Parish Council	Reference to localism bill should be made in the SCI	Document amended to include reference to this. Amendments have been made to Foreword and Chapter 3 (para 3.1).