



MOLE VALLEY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Local Committee for Mole Valley
20 July 2005**

KEY ISSUE:

The District Council is preparing the Mole Valley Local Development Framework which will set out its planning policies for the use and development of land in Mole Valley. It will succeed the Mole Valley Local Plan.

SUMMARY:

One of the first Local Development Framework documents that is being prepared is the Statement of Community Involvement. This will set out the District Council's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of other Local Development Documents that make up the Local Development Framework. It will also set out the arrangements for consulting the community on planning applications.

The draft Statement of Community Involvement was published on 8th July for six weeks' public consultation.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the draft Statement of Community Involvement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with Government guidance, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is one of the first Local Development Framework documents to be prepared by the Council.
- 1.2 The purpose of the SCI is to set out the Council's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of all Local Development Documents and in development control decisions on planning applications. It will state how and when the community will be involved and is effectively a service level agreement with the community. It is a particular feature of the new plan-making system.
- 1.3 The SCI must demonstrate how the Council will meet the minimum consultation requirements set out in the relevant Regulations and, more importantly, how it intends to exceed them and truly involve the community in the preparation of the documents making up the Local Development Framework as well as in planning applications.
- 1.4 The SCI will be subject to independent examination by an Inspector who will then produce a report which is binding on the Council. Once adopted, every subsequent Local Development Document must be prepared in accordance with the SCI and this will need to be demonstrated in a report accompanying the submission of each Local Development Document.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The draft SCI is attached to this report at Annexe A. It draws on the findings of a questionnaire survey of 3000 local residents and a number of targeted groups which included District and County Council Members, the Local Strategic Partnership, Parish Councils, Residents' Associations and organisations covering the interests of business, community, voluntary, disabled and youth organisations. It was also informed by the outcomes of a series of community workshops held throughout the District. The questionnaire and workshops provided the opportunity for respondents to indicate how they would like to be involved in the preparation of Local Development Documents and consulted on planning applications.
- 2.2 The draft SCI seeks to balance the community's expectations and preferred methods of involvement with the resources available for the task.

3.0 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The draft SCI sets out the District Council's proposed policy for :-

- Working continuously with all sections of the community, and with partner organisations and interested parties (“stakeholders”) in the preparation of and revision of the documents that will make up the new Local Development Framework and
- Consulting the community and other interested people on planning applications.

For community involvement in the Local Development Framework, it sets out:

- **Who** will be involved and consulted, identifying the different broad types of groups and organisations, for example, Parish Councils, Residents Associations, social and voluntary organisations, bodies which represent the interests of business, religious, racial and disabled groups, young people and other stakeholders;
- **How** they will be consulted, in terms of the potential different methods of informing, listening and involving people. This includes letter, media articles (including Mole Valley News), officers attending meetings of organisations such as Parish Councils and Residents Associations, small focused meetings, workshops and exhibitions.
- **When** they will be consulted, in terms of which method will be used to consult whom at particular stages in the preparation of different documents.

3.2 It also shows how the Council will meet minimum requirements set out in Regulations, and what it will do over and above those minimum standards when involving people.

3.3 For community involvement in planning applications, the draft SCI sets out very much what the District Council already does to consult the community and shows how this exceeds the minimum standards required.

3.4 The draft SCI also indicates that the need to review it will be identified by the Council in the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report and brought forward through a review of the Local Development Scheme.

3.5 The draft SCI was published for six weeks’ consultation on 8th July. The Council has consulted widely through direct mailing, a press release, the Council’s web site and an article in the Mole Valley News which is sent to every household and most large businesses in the District.

- 3.6 The comments that are received will be considered by the District Council and the draft SCI revised where it is considered appropriate to do so.
- 3.7 It is intended to submit the final version of the SCI to the Secretary of State in October. Following this it is anticipated that an Examination will be held in early 2006 so that the SCI can be adopted as soon as possible thereafter.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of preparing and implementing the SCI will be met from the existing budget provision and Planning Delivery Grant.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The new plan making system will have sustainability appraisal built in from the outset and is intended to result in more sustainable processes, policies and forms of development, and sustainable communities.

6.0 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None

7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The draft SCI seeks to ensure that all sections of the community have the opportunity to participate in the plan making and development control process.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None
