



# Dacorum Borough Council - Community Impact Assessment for Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

July 2019

## 1. About the Project, service change or policy development

Responsible officer	Andrew Horner
Name and description of project, service or policy	
<b>Revised Statement of Community Involvement</b>	
<p>The requirement to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SCI demonstrates that these legal requirements are being met. The SCI sets out the Council's approach to community involvement in planning. In particular, it details the Council's strategy for involving the community (in a meaningful and appropriate fashion) in both the consideration of planning applications and in policy making processes (through the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents and through neighbourhood planning). The document is designed to give a clear indication of the extent of the opportunities for getting involved in planning matters, the techniques which will be used, as well as the means to do so.</p> <p>The Revised SCI is based on an earlier, adopted document. It has been updated to take account of changes to various planning regulations (which we have to accord with) i.e. to include a planning enforcement section and reference to Neighbourhood Planning, and the emergence of new consultation techniques/processes. Although in general, the SCI follows the same basic principles as the 2016 version of the SCI. In the main, the changes to the SCI are relatively minor in nature and assist the Council in moving towards more efficient and modern ways of working and communicating.</p> <p>The aim is to have an inclusive approach given the importance of consultation and therefore should have a positive impact for all (as we consult as wide an audience as possible for planning policy documents in an aim to reduce inequality). All planning officers are expected to accord with the Statement of Community Involvement; either through the development of the Council's statutory plan or when consulting on a planning application.</p> <p>This affects anyone who lives in, studies in, works in, visits, or has an interest in Dacorum, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The community (residents, businesses, voluntary and specialist groups (i.e. residents associations))</li><li>• Those who engage in planning matters in Dacorum</li><li>• Parish, Town and County Councils (including those surrounding Dacorum)</li><li>• Interested developers, landowners and agents</li><li>• Statutory consultees and various partners</li><li>• Council staff and elected members</li></ul> <p>The SCI affects the way both Development Management and Spatial Planning will involve the community (and how people can get involved) at different stages of their activities. It also affects how planning functions are delivered. The process for involving interested parties in policy making processes is very different to engagement in the consideration of planning applications. In relation to specific planning applications, engagement (and its community impact) is very much locality specific depending on the scale of a planned development.</p> <p>It aims to promote equality for all through its objectives and particularly better access to the planning process in Dacorum and therefore make communities more sustainable.</p>	

## 2. Identifying the community impact

<b>What impacts will this change have on the community?</b> Information which might be useful in thinking about this includes our <a href="#">equality profiles</a> , available for a number of demographic groups in Dacorum, and <a href="#">Spotlight on Dacorum</a> , which provides information about the Borough as a whole and signposts users to detailed statistics at ward / postcode level through neighbourhood statistics.			
	Positive	Negative	<b>What are the positive and negative impacts?</b> How will the positive impacts be enhanced? How will the negative impacts minimised/eliminated?
<b>The community in general</b> e.g. social or economic benefits or negative impacts	✓		<u>Positive aspects enhanced:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Statement of Community Involvement aims at engaging people in planning matters, using a wide range of technical supports and methods. For example, diverse methods of involvement aimed at reaching groups that are not always involved and seeking community involvement to support community cohesion               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of engagement activities for all ages. The SCI includes consultation methods aimed at older people and younger people that can be used when appropriate e.g. the use of the internet and emails and online consultation may make it more accessible to younger people and the working population. Other forms of communication e.g. hard copy documents and use of local press should also ensure that all age groups, including older people are catered for.</li> <li>• Ensuring accessibility to information - availability of information online may help reduce barriers to involvement for those with physical disabilities.</li> <li>• People will be able to respond to the consultation in a variety of formats i.e. on line or by letter/email. Feedback from the consultation will be taken into account in determining the planning application or when preparing the final draft of the plan making document.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recognition of different consultation needs: the SCI makes clear that plan making documents are available at the Council's main offices as well as online.</li> <li>• The approach taken in the SCI seeks to strengthen community involvement in the planning process, including the business community.</li> <li>• The SCI provides certainty on when and how the local community and stakeholders know can get involved</li> <li>• For Plan making documents, we strive to involve as many sectors of the local community as possible. The SCI includes consultation methods</li> </ul>

**What impacts will this change have on the community?**

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	Positive	Negative	<p><b>What are the positive and negative impacts?</b></p> <p>How will the positive impacts be enhanced? How will the negative impacts minimised/eliminated?</p>
			<p>designed to reach all groups including ‘hard to reach’ groups. For example, community or voluntary organisations representing racial/ethnic Groups (e.g. Herts Equality Council) and religious bodies are also included as organisations that should be consulted wherever appropriate. Proactive engagement with organisations representative of certain groups such as the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison may also be appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks to make best use of resources for community involvement (so it can be supported financially long term and provides value for money).</li> <li>• To provide a service which is accessible and affordable to all. The wide variety of consultation methods which will be employed should enable all to have an equal opportunity to be involved (if they wish to). Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.</li> </ul> <p><u>Neutral impacts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not everybody wishes to get involved in planning (however much the Council may seek to engage with them).</li> <li>• <u>Rural areas/isolation</u> could be felt where accessibility is more problematic for some people. Although the variety of engagement methods provides communities with every opportunity to engage on planning matters.</li> <li>• Poor literacy skills or those with poor internet accessibility or notifications. The variety of engagement methods provides communities with every opportunity to engage on planning matters. We recognise that people with literacy issues may need assistance so Council officers are available to provide explanation of the process in order to make the process accessible to the widest audience. For those customers unable to access information online alternative access methods are available.</li> <li>• Every effort is made to enable all to have an equal opportunity to be involved, although if meetings or forums are held it may be harder to obtain the views of rural communities. Where</li> </ul>

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			such meetings are held, in the first instance the Council seeks to organise such events in easily accessible locations and venues. We will also take into account the scheduling (hours that the events run for and days of the week they are held).
<b>On DBC as an organisation</b> e.g. on staff or operations			Neutral aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will make sure as many people as possible know about our SCI and commitment to work with the community on planning. This has benefits for increased officer understanding of the community.</li> </ul>
<b>The specific demographic considerations or characteristics</b> e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation - specify where impacts are different for different considerations	✓		See above section about 'The community in general' where some demographic considerations or characteristics have already been covered.  <u>Positive aspects enhanced</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is awareness in the Planning &amp; Regeneration department that some individuals with protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> are not engaging with the planning system, for example, young people, ethnic community. The Statement of Community Involvement can potentially help improve the relationship between the Planning department and some individuals with protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> (as well as the rest of the community) by ensuring information is accessible and that people can participate / have their say.</li> <li>As above, by using a wide range of engagement methods and tools, it gives an opportunity for some individuals with protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> to get further opportunities to get involved in planning.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extensive use of the website in terms of access to planning information / consultations / documents is an opportunity for a wide range of people to get involved in planning, including those who cannot go to events / come to the office (due to their age / disability).</li> <li>We will do all we can to deal with requests for help to access the documents</li> </ul> </li> <li>Interested parties are given ample time to</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> E.G. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

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			engage in the planning process as consultation timeframes are aligned to meet the Regulation requirements. For example, complex plan making documents received 6+ weeks of public consultation.
<b>The environment</b> e.g. effects on the climate, trees, amenity space, biodiversity, water, energy, waste, material use, air quality	✓		<p><u>Positive aspects enhanced:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electronic communication and responses limit printing (and associated costs) which have negative effects on the environment.</li> </ul> <p><u>Future implications for the Local Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Communities are a key aim of the Planning process, as outlined in national policy and hence a key aim of the Local Plan, Development Management and Neighbourhood Planning. Sustainable communities are communities in which people wish to live work and spend time, for example, they meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. The SCI is part of a statutory process which aims to involve all interested stakeholders in the spatial planning of their area for the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Any community issues identified for this location</b> , if the project is based in a specific area – state if this is not applicable e.g. if there are no specific issues for this location or if the project is district-wide	✓		<p>The SCI relates to the whole Borough of Dacorum.</p> <p><u>Positive aspects enhanced</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known needs and issues have helped to inform the proposals contained within the SCI.</li> <li>All these stakeholders will be invited to make comments on the SCI during a 6 weeks consultation period which will feed into the final SCI document.</li> <li>Regular monitoring is undertaken of development within Dacorum and is reported annually through the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).</li> </ul> <p>The Local Plan and the planning process aim to address other equality issues relating to ‘spatial planning’ (planning spaces and places) which can be linked to some individuals with protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> such as public transport, quality of place, and issues that are specific to rural communities.</p>

<p>What evidence have you used to assess the impact on the community?          What baselines have been established and what data will be used to monitor the impact?</p>
<p>There is national, regional and local evidence available (such as the Census 2011) which shows that some individuals with protected characteristics<sup>1</sup> can face barriers in employment, access to services and information, participation in decision making and in consultation.</p> <p>This Community Impact Assessment has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken. This is a refresh of an existing document and the fundamental principles which we have historically used have not changed. However, the new consultation methods the revised SCI has embraced ensures that the wider community will be aware of any planning consultation.</p>

<p>What steps have you taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development?          E.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups?</p>
<p>The Council has developed a Local Plans consultation database which records details of planning and land agents and their clients and private developers who operate within the district. The database also records details of service providers (public and private) who operate within the district, as well as people who wished to be updated on planning matters.</p> <p>The mechanisms proposed to be used in the review of the SCI are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use of the principles in the existing SCI</li> <li>- engagement exercises (internally with members)</li> <li>- A consultation on the Draft SCI document that will be conducted in Spring 2019. We will advertise the consultation on the website, via E-Digest and via a Public Notice.</li> <li>- We will mail out all those registered in the Local Plans consultation database (either via email or hard copy letter).</li> <li>- We will use the comments receive to feed the final version of the document</li> <li>- We will provide feedback after the consultation</li> </ul> <p>A summary of the way we engaged with the community in the revision of the SCI will be available in a Consultation Statement (which will be reported to Cabinet).</p>

**3. Review** – a monitoring and evaluation programme will form part of the restoration project with annual results submitted to the HLF.

How will you review the impact, positive or negative once the service or policy has been implemented?		
<i>Action</i>	<i>By when</i>	<i>By who</i>
Improved involvement of all individuals with protected characteristics <sup>1</sup> in planning matters. Ensure where possible that the responses received during the consultation are incorporated as appropriate into the final SCI, to enable an improvement in how many individuals with protected characteristics <sup>1</sup> get involved in planning	Summer 2019	Planning Policy team / Development Management team
Continue to monitor the demography of participants and consider how to increase participation from any under-represented groups, to determine if the SCI is working or if an early review is necessary	Annually	Andrew Horner / Planning Policy team
Review the consultation methods at the end of each consultation to determine if the SCI is working or if an early review is necessary	Annually or after key consultati	Planning Policy team / Development Management team

How will you review the impact, positive or negative once the service or policy has been implemented?		
	on exercises	
Cabinet approved a six week focussed stakeholder consultation which was concluded 14 April 2019. Following consideration of the responses a very lightly revised SCI is being presented to Cabinet and full Council to consider approval and adoption. This impact assessment will be reviewed and updated where necessary post that consideration.	Summer 2019	Planning Policy team
Produce summary leaflets that succinctly outline the process to get involved with planning development or complex consultations run by the Council	As and when necessary	Planning Policy team

Name of responsible officer: Andrew Horner      Reviewed and signed off by: (relevant Group Manager)  
James Doe (for)

Role: Strategic Planning and Regeneration Team Leader      Role: Group Manager (Strategic Planning and Regeneration)

Date: 10/7/19      Date: 10/7/19