Addendum to the Stockport Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2015

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Part 1: Introduction

1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) requires the Council to publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) detailing how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications.

2. The current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for Stockport was adopted by the Council in October 2015 and can be viewed at https://www.stockport.gov.uk/statement-of-community-involvement. The current SCI document is referred to as the SCI (2015).

3. This addendum to the SCI (2015) is intended as an interim update to deal, principally, with the constraints on undertaking community involvement which arise from The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. The Council intends to prepare a wider-reaching review of the SCI to bring its provisions up-to-date and fully in line with national guidance or regulations later this municipal year.

4. It follows that the SCI (2015) should be read in conjunction with the statements set out in Part 2 and Part 3 of this addendum below.

Part 2: The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

5. Where under Regulation 3 of The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 the Secretary of State has declared (by published notice) that the incidence or transmission of Coronavirus is such that those Regulations are applied, and such declaration has not been revoked, the Council may by necessity limit the use of consultation methods which run counter to the advice of Public Health England or the Council's own Director of Public Health.

6. It may be necessary to limit the number of people that might attend exhibitions or displays at any given time and it may not be possible to hold conferences, workshops or public meetings in the way that they have traditionally been held.

7. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 have been temporarily amended from 16th July 2020 until 31st December 2020 to remove the requirement

for councils to make documents available for public inspection at the authority's principal office and at such other places as the authority considers appropriate. During this period the Council will not place consultation documents on deposit. Beyond that period the availability of documents made available for inspection might be constrained through a limit on the number of viewings within a given period and/or the need for viewings to be by prior-appointment only. It may be that locations at which documents would ordinarily have been made available for inspection or at which publicly available computers might be used to view documents will not be open.

8. The Council will consider using alternative methods of engagement to ensure that no interested person is unreasonably disadvantaged but, in all cases, will give primary consideration to the safety of its officers, elected Members and the public. Such alternative methods might include online seminars or offering appointments at alternative locations by special arrangement where it is apparent that a consultee would otherwise be disadvantaged.

9. In all cases, however, consultees are strongly encouraged to make use of the online version of documents if they can, thereby helping to limit the impact of any restrictions on the small percentage of people who do not have that option and might otherwise be disadvantaged.

10. The advice of the Council's Director of Public Health will be sought as appropriate.

11. Paragraphs 2 to 10 of this addendum, whenever applied, will have a direct impact on the application of the following elements of the SCI (2015):

    i. paragraph 2.10;
    ii. paragraph 2.14;
    iii. paragraph 2.19;
    iv. paragraphs 2.22 to 2.24 inclusive;
    v. Table 2 "Methods of Consultation";
    vi. paragraph 2.43;
    vii. Table 5 "Consultation Methods for Different Stages of Local Development Document Preparation";
    viii. paragraph 2.54;
    ix. paragraph 6.3; and
    x. paragraph 6.5.

Part 3: Future revisions of the Statement of Community Involvement

12. Current national guidance set out in Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 61-035-20190723 of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (titled "How should local planning authorities keep communities informed of evidence gathering and plan-making?")[1] sets out that Local Planning Authorities are not required to consult when reviewing and updating their Statement of Community Involvement. This is a change from earlier guidance and regulations which set out a statutory requirement for consultation to be undertaken whenever amendments to an SCI were proposed.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making

13. Paragraphs 2.36 and 2.37 of the SCI (2015) are consequently deleted and the following inserted in their place –

    2.36A The Council is required to review its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) every 5 years. It is important that the SCI is kept up-to-date to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process.

    2.36B This SCI has been under review since its first adoption and will remain under review in the future; the continuing aim is to learn from experience and find ways to improve the arrangements. The Authority's Monitoring Report is used to feedback and monitor consultation processes and the success of the SCI. As part of this the Council will evaluate consultation that has been undertaken (in terms of resources used, response rates and the effectiveness of the methods and procedures used) and amendments to the SCI might subsequently be made. The Council might also have regard to feedback received from the public or other stakeholders. Amendments to the SCI might also be made as a consequence of changes to legislation or regulatory requirements such as, for example, changes to the details of a specific consultation body listed in Appendix 2: Consultation Bodies.

    2.36C In accordance with national Planning Practice Guidance the Council will not consult when reviewing and updating their Statement of Community Involvement. However, the Council welcomes constructive feedback on its methods of consultation especially where this can help to improve their inclusiveness, appropriateness, cost-effectiveness or timeliness.

14. The column of Table 2 "Methods of Consultation" of the SCI (2015) headed "Statement of Community Involvement" is deleted.

15. Section 5 of the SCI (2015), titled "SCI – Review", is deleted.