

## **Warwick District Council Statement of Community Involvement (April 2007)**

### **INSPECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **Introduction**

- 1.1 An independent examination of Warwick District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been carried out in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act), as applied by s18(4) of the Act.
- 1.2 Section 20(5) indicates the two purposes of the independent examination in parts (a) and (b). With regard to part (a) I am satisfied that the SCI satisfies the requirements of the relevant sections of the Act, in particular that its preparation has accorded with the Local Development Scheme as required by s19(1) of the Act.
- 1.3 Part (b) is whether the SCI is sound. Following Paragraph 3.10 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, the examination has been based on the 9 tests set out (see Appendix A). The starting point for the assessment is that the SCI is sound. Accordingly changes are made in this binding report only where there is clear need in the light of tests in PPS12.
- 1.4 A total of 22 representations were received, all of which have been considered. The Council proposed a number of amendments to the SCI in response to representations received and these have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

#### **Test 1**

- 2.1 The Council has undertaken the consultation required under Regulations 25, 26 and 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
- 2.2 This test is met.

#### **Test 2**

- 3.1 Section 8 of the SCI provides information on the links between Local Development Framework (LDF) documents and other existing strategies. This section acknowledges that the LDF is a way of delivering the aims of the Community Plan, 'Warwick District 2020', and the Corporate Strategy 2003-2007. Paragraph 8.5 states that the Council will work with the Warwick Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership, to make sure that the LDF encompasses the same vision and objectives as the Community Plan and Corporate Strategy. The SCI also makes reference to other community strategies (Paragraphs 8.6 – 8.10), such as the Warwick District

Consultation Strategy and states that consideration will be given to how these will be linked in terms of objectives and consultation.

3.2 This test is met.

### **Test 3**

4.1 The Council has set out in Appendix 1 of the SCI those groups which will be consulted. This list includes the statutory bodies from PPS12 Annex E. However, the requirement to consult, as statutory consultees, Town and Parish Councils, both within and adjoining the authority's area should be explicit within the SCI. I therefore have the following recommendation to make:

**(R1)** Add to (c) under Specific Consultation Bodies the following:

"Relevant authorities also include Town and Parish Councils, both within Warwick District and those immediately adjoining the area."

4.2 It is stated at Paragraph 4.2 of the SCI that the Council holds a database of consultee details and that this will be updated as necessary. Furthermore, the Council states in Paragraph 4.3 that it will consult with additional local stakeholders as part of its commitment to encourage participation in the process.

4.3 A number of representors request the inclusion of their organisation in the lists contained at Appendix 1 of the SCI. As the Council has confirmed that these organisations are either listed in its database, or will be added to the database, I am content that they do not need to be listed specifically in the SCI.

4.4 Subject to the recommendation above, this test is met.

### **Test 4**

5.1 Part A of Sections 2 and 3, and specifically Tables 2 - 5 show that the Council will involve and inform people from the early stages of Local Development Document (LDD) preparation and Tables 4 and 5 set out the range of methods the Council will employ to do this. The Council clarifies in these tables the stages at which consultation will take place.

5.2 However, the SCI should show that consultation will take place with the statutory consultees as defined in the regulations during the 'Pre Production' stage of LDD documents. I therefore have the following recommendation to make:

**(R2)** Amend the first sentence of the first row, second column of Tables 2 and 3 to read as follows:

"We will inform the evidence base by involving our partners and the community, including the statutory consultees."

5.3 Table 2 and Table 4 of the SCI also omit a key stage in the DPD process that may occur if the document is concerned with allocations of land. I therefore recommend amendments to these tables to reflect this stage in the process.

**(R3)** Add a further row to Table 2 after the 'Submission' row to read as follows:

"If, during the submission consultations, alternative sites are proposed, the Council will advertise these alternative sites and invite comments for a further period of six weeks."

To Table 4 add a new row after the 'Submission' row entitled "Alternative Sites Consultation". Appropriate notation should be entered against the relevant publicity methods the Council will employ at this stage.

5.4 As a result, I am satisfied that providing these stages are followed the consultation proposed will be undertaken in a timely and accessible manner.

5.5 Subject to the recommendations above, this test is met.

### **Test 5**

6.1 Section 3 and specifically Tables 4 and 5 set out the methods that the Council proposes to use to involve the community and stakeholders. These cover a variety of recognised consultation techniques that will present information via a range of different media. The Council indicates through these tables at what stages of LDD preparation the various methods might be employed.

6.2 The SCI acknowledges at Paragraph 6.9 that the Council may have to provide extra support to facilitate consultation with certain groups or individuals and proposes in this paragraph how it might do this. This paragraph also explains how the Council will make its information accessible to all members of society and sets out how it will meet requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

6.3 I am satisfied that the methods of consultation proposed in the SCI are suitable for the intended audiences and for the different stages in LDD preparation.

6.4 This test is met.

### **Test 6**

7.1 Paragraph 6.1 of the SCI explains how the Council will seek to ensure that sufficient resources are put in place to achieve the scale

of consultation envisaged. I am satisfied that the Council is alert to the resource implications of the SCI.

7.2 This test is met.

### **Test 7**

8.1 Section 7 of the SCI explains how the results of community involvement will be taken into account by the Council and used to inform decisions. The Council also proposes to prepare reports at the end of the consultation period explaining how views have been considered and documents changed in light of the community involvement. The SCI states at the end of Paragraph 7.3 that these will be made publicly available on the Council's website.

8.2 However, the over reliance on electronic dissemination of this information is potentially exclusive. These reports should be made more widely available and I therefore have the following recommendation to make.

**(R4)** Amend the final sentence of Paragraph 7.3 to read as follows:

"All such Council reports are public and will be published on our website, [www.warwickdc.gov.uk](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk) and made available in hard copy at The Council Offices, Royal Leamington Spa, The Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa, Whitnash Town Council Office, Leamington Spa Library, Warwick Library, Kenilworth Library, Lillington Library, Whitnash Library, the Chain Community Office and Brunswick Healthy Living Centre."

8.3 Subject to the recommendation above, this test is met.

### **Test 8**

9.1 Paragraph 6.10 explains that the Council continuously monitors and reviews all consultation exercises and that the SCI will be formally reviewed as part of this process and reported on through the Annual Monitoring Report. Table 1 also explains that the SCI will be subject to continual assessment and evaluation.

9.2 I am satisfied that the Council has mechanisms for reviewing the SCI and has identified potential triggers for the review of the SCI.

9.3 This test is met.

### **Test 9**

10.1 Part B of Sections 2 and 3, Section 9 and also Appendix 2 of the SCI describe the Council's policy for consultation on planning applications. Tables 6 and 7 meet the minimum requirements and provide details of additional methods of consultation. Appendix 2 distinguishes between procedures appropriate to different types and

scale of application and Paragraph 9.4 includes information on how the consultation results will inform decisions.

10.2 This test is met.

### **Conclusions**

11.1 The Council has set out in its Regulation 31 Statement a number of proposed changes to the SCI in response to representations received on the submission document. These suggested amendments, given in Appendix B to this report, do not affect the substance of the SCI but they do improve the clarity and transparency of the submission document. I therefore agree that they be included.

**(R5)** Implement the changes proposed in Appendix B to this report.

11.2 In the event of any doubt, please note that I am content for such matters as any minor spelling, grammatical or factual matters to be amended by the Council, so long as this does not affect the substance of the SCI.

11.3 Subject to the implementation of the recommendations set out in this report, the Warwick District Council SCI (April 2007) is sound.

Inspector

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