



## North Devon Council and Torrige District Council

Report Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**Topic: North Devon and Torrige Statement of Community Involvement**

Report by: Senior Planning Policy Officer (TDC)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report provides feedback on recent consultation undertaken on a jointly prepared draft North Devon and Torrige Statement of Community Involvement, proposes revisions in response to received comments and seeks authorisation for the document's adoption.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. This Committee agrees the proposed revisions to the draft North Devon and Torrige Statement of Community Involvement, as presented in appendix 1.

2.2. This Committee agrees that the Councils adopt the Statement of Community Involvement, provided as appendix 2.

### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To ensure the Councils are compliant with relevant legislation and regulations; Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) are required to be reviewed every five years. The Councils current separate SCIs are dated 2014 (TDC) and 2015 (NDC) and thus require review.

3.2. Comments received in response to a six-week consultation have been considered and incorporated into the revised SCI attached at appendix 2.

### 4. REPORT

4.1. The SCI outlines how the Councils will involve members of the community and stakeholders in decisions affecting planning and development in northern Devon, including:

- how and when there are opportunities to influence new planning policy documents such as the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans;
- how and when to comment on planning applications, as well as other forms of application for development such as Listed Buildings and prior notifications submitted to North Devon and Torrige District Councils;



- the publicity and notifications undertaken for different types of application by both Councils;
- the processes associated with determining a planning application, from receipt to decision; and
- information on who to contact for assistance in planning matters and the source of further information.

4.2. Both Councils have previously adopted their own separate SCIs. Since these were published a number of changes have taken place which resulted in the need for the SCIs to be reviewed:

- local authorities are now required to review their SCIs ever 5 years;
- a requirements for local authorities to set out in their SCIs how they will provide advice and assistance to communities to support them in the neighbourhood planning process; and
- the evolution of community engagement methods, particularly in the use of electronic communications and social media.

4.3. A draft SCI (March 2022) was prepared to address the requirements set out above, which was considered by this Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The draft document was subsequently subject to a six-week period of consultation, which concluded on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Notification of the consultation formed part of the widely publicised "People and Place Project", including direct notifications to individuals and organisations, press releases and adverts with social media being widely used.

4.4. The comments received, together with a response to each and as considered necessary a proposed revision to the draft SCI, are set out in appendix 1. Seven respondents provided thirty-nine comments, ten being an observation or a general comment, four in support, including support subject to amendment and twenty-five were objections.

4.5. As detailed in appendix 1 this Committee is recommended to make only a few changes to the draft SCI, for correction and for clarification, which are also provided below:

- clarification of how duly made comments to Development Plan Documents will be considered in paragraph 4.5;
- additional detail provided, which confirms that town and parish councils are notified of planning applications relevant to their area when successfully validated through a new paragraph following paragraph 7.15;



- the inclusion of Historic England as a Prescribed Body in Table A1; and
- clarification provided that Consultation Bodies will be invited to respond to consultations on the Sustainability Appraisal, in a new paragraph following Table A2.

4.6. The SCI, presented in appendix 2 has been amended as outlined above and is the version to be considered for adoption.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Adoption of the SCI forms part of the planning policy teams existing work programme, any associated cost in respect of document production, notification and publication will be shared across the Councils.

## 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. No impact identified.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. No environmental implications result from the recommendations of this report.

## 8. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

8.1. Schedule 2, paragraph 1.1.1-1.1.3 of the North Devon Council and Torridge District Council Joint Planning Policy Agreement.

## 9. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- National Planning Policy Framework 2021
- Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
- North Devon Council Statement of Community Involvement 2015



- Torrige District Council Statement of Community Involvement 2014

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

## 11. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The North Devon Council and Torrige District Council Corporate Priorities have been considered in the drafting of the report.

## 12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Cllr P. Watson (TDC) Lead member for Planning and Development.

Cllr M Prowse (NDC) Lead Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning Policy

Helen Smith (TDC) Planning Manager

Sarah-Jane Mackenzie Shapland (NDC) Head of Place, Property and Regeneration