

Update to the Hampshire Statement of Community Involvement

Summary of proposed changes, June 2023

Introduction

1. The Hampshire Statement of Community Involvement is a statement of policy for involving interested parties in matters relating to minerals, waste management and County Council planning and associated developments within Hampshire.
2. The current version of the Statement was adopted in November 2017 and now needs updating again as the National Planning Policy Guidance requires this document to be reviewed and updated every five years.
3. You can read the proposed Hampshire Statement of Community Involvement at www.hants.gov.uk/sci-consultation.
4. This document sets out the key changes and the associated rationale, including reference to key documents such as relevant national planning policy.
5. When you have read these proposed changes, please visit www.hants.gov.uk/sci-consultation, email planning@hants.gov.uk, or call 0300 555 1389*, for information on how to share your views on the proposed Hampshire Statement of Community Involvement. **This consultation closes at 11:59pm on Sunday 30 July 2023.**

Legislative and policy updates

6. Since the current Statement of Community Involvement was adopted there have been legislative and policy changes which require references within the document to now be updated. These include the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) 2017 Regulations, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (2022) and associated planning reforms.

Changes to make the Statement easier to read and understand

7. The Statement has been reduced in length, where possible repetition has been removed, and efforts have been made to ensure the Statement is as easy to understand as possible given the technical nature of the planning process, and the specific role of the County Council as a planning authority.

* Calls from a landline will be charged at the local rate, although mobile phone charges may vary.

Reference to social media and wider consultation techniques

8. The County Council now uses social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, to engage with the community. The Statement has therefore been updated to reflect this as one of the ways planning consultations may be publicised.
9. With advances in technology, there are now even more tools that can be used to engage the community when consulting on planning matters. These include virtual classrooms, videos and interactive mapping tools. The Statement has been updated to reflect this.
10. The Statement has also been updated to reflect the fact that County Council now produces a newsletter to keep those who have opted to receive updates on minerals and waste planning informed.

Reference to Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004

11. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulation 2004 enable members of the public to access any recorded information held by, or on behalf of, the County Council. Reference to this, and how to find out more information about making a request for information has been included in the Statement.

Update to current processes

12. The County Council has made recent improvements to its planning processes, largely because of improvements to the web-based system that manages planning applications. The Statement now includes reference to petitions and the County Council's process for dealing with them if they are submitted in relation to either the plan-making process or a planning application.

Change to the planning application consultation period

13. The County Council is under increasing pressure to ensure that planning applications are processed within the timescales set out within the relevant planning Regulations. In order to ensure the process is as streamlined as possible, it is proposed to amend the consultation period for all consultees commenting on planning applications from 28 days to 21 days.
14. At present, all statutory consultees are given the minimum 21 days within which to respond to planning applications, however the adopted Statement of Community Involvement provides other interested parties with 28 days. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 states that a minimum of 21 days should be provided to invite comments on planning applications. The change is therefore intended to regularise the consultation period and provide consistency across consultees in line with the Regulations. There are certain situations where increased timescales are required by the Regulations and therefore these will be adhered to.