

Addendum to Barnet's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2018

September 2020

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) requires the Council to publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) detailing how it will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing the Local Plan and determining planning applications.
- 1.1.2 The current SCI for Barnet was adopted by the Council (as the local planning authority) in October 2018 and can be viewed at - https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sci_2018.pdf
- 1.1.3 National guidance sets out how local planning authorities should review and update their SCI to comply with COVID-19 guidance. It states that temporary amendments are necessary to allow plan making to progress and to continue to promote effective community engagement by means which are reasonably practicable, whilst restrictions relating to COVID-19 are in place.
- 1.1.4 This addendum to the current SCI is intended as an interim and temporary update to address constraints associated with community involvement on planning matters. These are highlighted in the The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. As such, Barnet's current SCI should be read in conjunction with this Addendum.

2 Consultation During COVID-19 Restrictions

- 2.1.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in preparation for public consultation on the next draft of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) the Council is clarifying, through this Addendum how it will engage with the community and continue to ensure that planning processes in Barnet remain fair, transparent and inclusive.
- 2.1.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 have been temporarily amended (up to 31st December 2020) to remove the requirement for local planning authorities to make documents available for public inspection at the authority's principal office and at such other places (ie public libraries) as the authority considers appropriate.
- 2.1.3 In accordance with the Regulations the Council will not place consultation documents on deposit for public inspection up until 31st December 2020. This Addendum highlights that beyond that period the physical availability of planning documents for inspection may continue to be constrained. This could be 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.
- 2.1.4 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 staff, elected Members and the public.

- 2.1.5 National guidance suggests using online engagement to its full potential, such as virtual exhibitions, digital consultations, video conferencing, social media and providing documents for inspection on a public website. Online exhibitions and events will be used in place of face-to-face events whilst restrictions are in place. The Council's extensive consultation database, which includes residents' associations and community groups, will help allow engagement with those that may not have access to the internet within these groups and communities. Information on consultations will still be available through public notices and engagement by telephone or in writing will continue to be used.
- 2.1.6 In all cases, however, consultees are strongly encouraged to make use of the online version of documents if possible, 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. It is advised to keep updated with services available at libraries, such as pre-bookable computers, to allow access to consultation documents.
- 2.1.7 In terms of Neighbourhood Planning the Government has suspended any referendum on a Neighbourhood Plan until 6 May 2021. It advises that plans that have reached the stage of referendum will be given significant weight in decision making.
- 2.1.8 Paragraphs 2.1.1 to 2.1.7 of this addendum, whenever applied, will have a direct impact on the application of the following elements of the current SCI:
- Paragraph 1.2.1
 - Paragraph 2.2.1
 - Paragraph 2.2.11
 - Paragraph 2.2.12
 - Paragraph 8.7.1
 - Paragraph 8.8.1
 - Figure 8
 - Paragraph 8.9.1
 - Paragraph 8.9.2
 - Paragraph 9.7.1