

Statement of Community Involvement Addendum for the South Essex Plan

Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Addendum sets out a consistent approach to consultation and involvement with regard to the preparation of the South Essex Plan. This SCI acts as an addendum to each of the existing SCI's for the six South Essex authorities working in partnership on this Plan. These are Basildon Borough, Brentwood Borough, Castle Point Borough, Rochford District, Southend Borough and Thurrock Borough Council.

Important Note

This SCI Addendum sets out the approach to consultation as it relates to the South Essex Plan only. The consultation approach for all other planning documents and planning applications remains as set out in the existing Statement of Community Involvement adopted by each individual authority. Please refer to the individual authority's website for details.

Map of South Essex



Background

The South Essex Plan will be a formal statutory Development Plan Document, providing the strategic planning framework for the six Local Planning Authority areas identified above. Essex County Council will assist with preparing the South Essex Plan. The adopted Plan will include an overall spatial strategy as well as contain strategic allocations and policies setting out the amount of housing, employment and supporting infrastructure needing to be provided over the period to 2038, in aid of the delivery of the South Essex 2050 Ambition.

Public consultation is required at a number of specific stages during the preparation of the South Essex Plan, including its final “Publication” stage, after which it will be submitted to Government. An independent Planning Inspector will then carry out an Examination of the document, considering the views of interested people. The final decision on the soundness of the South Essex Plan will be made by that Inspector and, if found sound, the plan can be adopted by the six Councils. You can find Government guidance on preparing local plans here: www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans

Consultation General Principles

We will apply some general principles to our South Essex Plan consultation:

- Involvement will be open to all regardless of gender, faith, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and age.
- We will undertake consultation as the Plan is prepared.
- We will choose consultation processes by balancing available resources, cost and time constraints, but always in accordance with the requirements as set out in Government legislation and regulations¹.

¹ This will include the presence of restrictions on movement due to Government restrictions because of the Covid 19 crisis

- Consultation will be based on publically available evidence based documents.
- We will approach the consultation process with an open mind and be prepared to alter our position in the light of the information that it discloses
- Consultation publications will be clear and concise and avoid unnecessary jargon, without understating the complexities of any issue.
- Consultations will be run for a minimum of 6 weeks in conformity with Government legislation.
- We will inform those who respond to any stage of consultation of further consultation opportunities and make a summary of our responses to each consultation available on our website.

Who we will Consult

- Statutory organisations including local, town and parish councils, neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers and Government bodies as legally required or otherwise appropriate.
- The general public.
- Groups representing place, communities or other special interests including minorities.
- Local businesses, voluntary sector and other organisations.
- Transport and Infrastructure Providers
- Planning and development industry stakeholders.
- Any others who have expressed an interest in the South Essex Plan.

How we will Consult

- We will contact appropriate organisations and individuals directly.
- We will publicise consultations by a combination of methods, as appropriate,²

² This will reflect the presence of restrictions on movement due to Government restrictions, such as those experienced during Covid 19 crisis

such as: local authority websites, press releases, displays, social media, community groups and community events.

- We will make consultation documents available at council offices and public libraries where appropriate and practicable.³
- Consultation documents will be made available for download via each Council's website.
- We will consider organising consultation events such as public exhibitions and stakeholder workshops, at a range of times and locations or via electronic means such as Zoom⁴
- We will publish comments received or a summary as soon as feasible. We will explain how these comments have been taken into account when decisions are made.

When we will Consult

- Each authority's Local Development Scheme, available online, provides a 'live' timetable for preparing the South Essex Plan, setting out key consultation stages and milestones;
- We will consider the need for targeted engagement with organisations and key stakeholders in developing the Plan, in addition to legal requirements;
- The first consultation on the South Essex Plan will present the key issues that need to be addressed and will ask for comments on approaches to address these issues;
- We will consider the need to prepare documents for additional consultation stages setting out further options, information, greater detail or preferred options;
- Once we think there has been an appropriate level of community involvement, both in terms of the opportunity to shape plan approaches and

³ "Where practicable" relates to the presence of restrictions on movement due to Government restrictions because of the Covid 19 crisis

⁴ Under Covid 19 restrictions it may not be possible to hold face to face meetings

to be compliant with Government regulations, we will formally publish the "Publication Version" of the Plan in accordance with the relevant regulations. A final opportunity for public engagement will be given before submission to Government for independent examination⁵

- Each iteration of the South Essex Plan will be presented alongside an evidence base and a statement setting out the role that the previous consultation played in its production.

Data Protection Statement

Those parties who have been consulted on this SCI Addendum have been consulted directly by their Local Authority in conjunction with the consultation procedure as set out in their existing SCI.

The details of anyone who makes a representation on the wording of this SCI Addendum or who otherwise expresses an interest in being consulted throughout the development of the South Essex Plan will be held on a database maintained and shared between the six South Essex Authorities (Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock), and Essex County Council. This database will be used for the sole purposes of matters relating to the production of the South Essex Plan.

This database, in whole or in part, may need to be shared with any consultants who the authorities need to work with in order to manage future consultations. Data protection regulations will be enforced with any consultant that this may apply to.

The names of any member of the public making a representation to any South Essex Plan related consultation will be published alongside their representation as representations are required to be made a matter of public record. All other personal details will be redacted.

⁵ In certain circumstances and following this it may be necessary to engage further with the community on all or part of the document before submission of a revised version to government. This may be owing to specific matters raised in representations or changes to government policy which may have occurred after the initial Publication consultation.