

## Responses to questions put to the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee – 13 August 2020

Please see full text of items appended to the agenda under item 5: Petitions, Deputations and Questions

### 1. Points made by the Rutland Parish Council Working Group

*The proposed changes to the SCI are the minimum requirement for Local Plan consultation to take place whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain in place. The Parish Forum is an un-constituted body which is chaired by the Chairmen of the County Council. The Forum was not established for the purpose of responding to consultations and therefore does not have a role in making representation. Each individual Town and Parish Council and Parish Meeting is individually consulted in their own right as a statutory consultee. The parish briefings originally set up by the Council as part of Covid-19 arrangements offer an opportunity for parish councils to ask questions and communicate with the Parishes. However, the SCI allows flexibility to use forums such as the Parish Forum to engage different groups in the process.*

### 2. Question from Mrs Sharon Ashworth

“Given that the scrutiny committee did not have sight of the consultation questionnaire for the Statement of Community involvement before the process started, how many members of the scrutiny committee took the time to respond to the consultation?”

*We are not aware that any members of the scrutiny formally responded to the consultation.*

### 3. Questions from Mr J Orme

“Is the Committee satisfied that officers have fully analysed and set out the considerations which ought to be taken into account in finalising the SCI in relation to the Parish Council Forum?”

“If so, does the Committee agree with the conclusion that the SCI not be amended in respect of the Parish Council Forum?”

“If so, how does the Committee propose that the Council avoid damage to the Council’s reputation”

*It is accepted by the Scrutiny Committee that the SCI allows sufficient flexibility to use forums such as the Parish Forum to engage different groups in the Local Plan consultation process.*

### 4. Question from Mrs C. Gwilliam

“How useful is an acknowledgment in the SCI that limited telephone contact is available and is this evidence enough to satisfy the duty on Local Authorities?”

*The SCI makes clear that telephone contact is available and it satisfies the duty on Local Authorities. Customer Services will be taking initial calls and providing a call back request to*

*the Local Plan team to respond the next day; this will be on the basis of a morning or afternoon call. Planning Officers will then keep trying until contact is made and will record failed calls.*

5. Question from Melanie Mansell

“Given that one of the Gunning principles require that ‘conscientious consideration’ must be given to the consultation response, and that there have been some serious challenges to the legality and appropriateness of the consultation, are the scrutiny committee satisfied that the leading nature of question 3 has not unfairly influenced those people who took the time to respond?, and to what extent does this render the Consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement ineffective?”

*The Scrutiny Committee are satisfied the SCI consultation meets the Gunning Principles. Although there is no statutory requirement to undertake consultation on the SCI, consultation was undertaken following the 2012 Planning Regulations. The SCI consultation document clearly sets out the changes and why they’re being made. Furthermore, the changes proposed are necessary to reflect legislative changes and the restrictions during the current pandemic. The consultation on the SCI is considered appropriate and proportionate, particularly given that it relates to the minimum methods of consultation with the community and as such undertaken in accordance with the Government’s code of recommended practice on Local Authority publicity and aligned with the Gunning principles.*

6. Question from Mr P. Gwilliam

There are 3 strands to my question to scrutiny -

1. The cabinet have seemingly made it unnecessary difficult for the scrutiny committee to do their job in the way the information on the proposed changes to the SCI have been presented. Why is this and what can be learnt?
2. What is the view of each and every committee member on this point and is there any agreement amongst the committee members?
3. Do committee members feel they understand the reasons for endless changes, corrections and tidy ups to fully consider the draft revised SCI?

*The Committee Members understand the reasons for the manner in which the changes and revisions made to the SCI have been presented and do not feel that this has made reviewing the document unnecessarily difficult.*

7. Question from Mr N. Milne

In the June 2020 Ketton Parish Council meeting minutes it is noted that Ketton Together has taken the time to consider how they can best support the village going forward. They acknowledged that a number of villagers will need to continue to self-isolate to protect themselves and their families & there will also be people who need to self-isolate because they have symptoms, or, have been contacted through the track and trace process.

Can Karen Payne confirm if she has discussed with Ketton Together the changes to the SCI, if so when was this and what was their view on the steps taken to unsure engagement by all those continuing to self-isolate?

I am interested to learn their thoughts on a suggested triage systems for callers without internet access and the decision to still have documents available at the office. How would they get to the Catmose office if they are self-isolating and do not have access to transport?

What would they need from the planning officers to respond to the next stage of the Local Plan consultation?

Do the organisers of Ketton Together think there is a need for the planning officer support to be available for those who HAVE internet access but are self-isolating, this could be needed to compensate for the difficulty in having any form of contact with members of their local community who may be able to assist with answering questions on the Local Plan regulation 19 process?

There is much to consider and ward councillors need to be sure they have talked with their parishioners in order to comment. Perhaps sign off by full council is needed.

*Councillor Payne consulted with Ketton Parish Council on the issue of the SCI. During the meeting, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Oliver Hemsley stated that it was his belief that the role of a Ward Councillor in the SCI process was to consult and discuss with their Parish Council and to share information with the Executive; it was not the ward member's responsibility to contact every resident with limited internet access.*