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Statement of Consultation Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

January 2020

Introduction

This statement sets out comments received and the Council's response to the Surrey Heath Borough Council's consultation on the updated Statement of Community Involvement.

The updated Statement of Community Involvement update was consulted on from Tuesday 5th November 2019 until Tuesday 17th December 2019.

Letters and e-mails were sent out to residents and organisations on the Council's Local Plan database, neighbouring authorities, Parish Councils and those Specific and General Consultation Bodies, and Local Equality Groups set out in Appendix 1 of the draft Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation was advertised on the front page of the Council's website, and the Council's social media platforms. The consultation was also accessible online at <https://consult.surreyheath.gov.uk/consult.ti/SHBCSCI>

In summary, the changes to the Statement of Community Involvement following consultation are as follows:

- Page 6, paragraph 1.8 – Add further bullet point: *“Members of the public who do not have access to, or the means to use the Internet.”*
- Page 9, Table 2 – Amend Table 2 column 2 row 1 to include the following statement: *“Make Local Plan documentation available to view as part of the consultation.”*
- Page 22, Appendix 1 – Add a footnote reference to The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for Specific Consultation Bodies and General Consultation Bodies.
- Page 23, Appendix 1 – Amend title of Local Equality Groups Table to *“Local Equality Groups in Surrey Heath”*.
- Page 23, Appendix 1 – Amend Local Equality Groups Table to include a section for Gypsy and Traveller Groups. Include within this section the Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Communities Forum.
- Page 25, Appendix 3 – Add definition for Large Scale Major Development to Glossary of Terms for Community Involvement.
- Page 27, Appendix 3 – Add definition for Small Scale Major Development to Glossary of Terms for Community Involvement.

Responses to the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Respondent	Comment	Surrey Heath Borough Council's (SHBC) Response
Chobham Parish Council	<p>Thank you for inviting Chobham Parish Council's views on the above consultation. The Council very much believes in community engagement in the planning system and supports the aims of the statement.</p> <p>After reviewing the draft document, the Council would like to make the following observations and comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As one of the principles of community involvement is identified as "increased focus on the priorities identified by the local community" (paragraph 1.5), the Parish Council wonders whether more could be done to ensure Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) is aware of the priorities at a very local level in Chobham. The Parish Council would welcome any opportunity to explore this issue further. 2. Now that planning applications and planning policy documents are almost all published exclusively online, it is of great importance that there is no delay in their publication and that they are easily accessible 24/7, particularly during consultation periods. Online feedback forms should be user-friendly and not overly prescriptive or repetitive (e.g. not selecting from a set of pre-defined responses or forcing a response to every section of longer consultations). 3. As a key user of SHBC's online planning pages, the Parish Council feels it would have been appropriate to have been consulted at an early stage before the implementation of the new online system. It is felt that the lack of consultation was a missed opportunity to ensure that the new system would be set up to suit users' needs. The Council would appreciate 	<p>Noted. SHBC recognises the importance of appropriate partnership working with Parish Councils on local issues and encourages an ongoing dialogue.</p> <p>Noted. All public planning policy consultations will continue to be accessible on the Council's website and will be available throughout the full duration of the relevant consultation period. Planning applications will also remain accessible on the Council's website at all times (notwithstanding any temporary technical issues that are beyond the Council's control).</p> <p>Noted. The Council's consultation and planning application systems have been subject to procurement processes in accordance with the Council's guidelines.</p>

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	<p>being consulted on any future major changes which could affect its workflow.</p> <p>4. While it is understood that the Planning Authority cannot require developers to involve the local community, SHBC is in a position to help developers recognise the value and benefits of genuine engagement with the community from an early stage. There remains a perception that public engagement is a “tick box exercise” for developers and recent experiences in Chobham have done nothing to change that view.</p> <p>5. The Parish Council has previously written to the Borough Council regarding its concerns around changes to planning laws affecting High Streets. Since that letter, it appears there are even more widespread plans to extend permitted development rights. Community involvement cannot take place if changes are made at government level that remove the chance for occupiers, neighbours, local people and groups to have a say. The Parish Council urges the Borough Council to resist changes to legislation that undermine public involvement in the planning process.</p> <p>6. It is noted that the topics of appeals and enforcement do not appear to be covered in the document. The Parish Council suggests that as these are planning matters where the community has an interest, it may be appropriate for the Planning Authority to detail how it will involve the community and stakeholders in these areas.</p> <p>7. Chobham Parish Council previously discussed with SHBC the possibility of holding a public meeting regarding potential</p>	<p>Noted. Not within the scope of the SCI. The SCI is a document that sets out how the community will be involved in the various stages of plan making and in consulting on planning applications and preparation of neighbourhood plans in Surrey Heath.</p> <p>Noted. The Council endeavours to continue to respond to government consultations that are held in relation to any proposed changes to permitted development rights, as appropriate.</p> <p>The SCI explains to the community how and when they can be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents, the determination of planning applications, and neighbourhood planning. It is not within the scope of the SCI to set out community involvement in appeals or enforcement cases.</p> <p>Noted. The SCI sets out that applicants should submit a Statement of Community</p>

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	<p>re-development of the Fairoaks Airport site. SHBC advised that its preferred approach for such a meeting would be to listen to what the public have to say rather than give a prepared speech. The meeting did not end up taking place, but could have been a valuable way to involve the public at an early stage. The Planning Authority may wish to consider including a public meeting as part of its standard process when potential development is of a scale affecting large numbers of people within the Borough.</p> <p>8. The SCI draft document mentions petitions in relation to how many signatories are required to trigger public speaking at a Planning Applications Committee meeting, but does not seem to cover or sign post how the Council will respond to planning-related petitions themselves and what action can be expected.</p> <p>9. It is suggested that the “hard to reach” groups listed in paragraph 1.8 could include members of the public who are not online and/or not confident with technology.</p> <p>10. On a general note, it is felt that public confidence and trust in the planning system is vital to encouraging engagement. Upholding planning conditions, swift action to deal with breaches, equality and consistency of planning decisions,</p>	<p>Engagement, as required in the Surrey Heath Local Validation List and Guidance Document, 2014, where community engagement has been undertaken, or as a matter of course for applications involving 10 or more dwellings or 1000 sq. metres commercial increase.</p> <p>Noted. The Council has no set procedures for responding to petitions relating to planning application sites beyond those referenced in the SCI. Paragraph 5.7 of the SCI sets out, “<i>comments supporting or objecting to a proposal may be made by anyone regardless of whether they have received a letter or been individually notified.</i>” This could include any comments submitted as part of a petition or through a local group.</p> <p>Noted. Paragraph 1.8 of the SCI will be amended to contain an additional bullet stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Members of the public who do not have access to, or the means to use the Internet.</i>” <p>Noted. The Council recognises the importance of community engagement.</p>

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	<p>evidence that views and comments have been taken into account, and many other factors play an important part in maintaining or restoring such confidence. I trust that the above feedback is useful and, as always, if the Council can provide any further information or clarification around the above points, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>	
Historic England	<p>The consultation process detailed in the SCI should be adequate in meeting the requirements of the Local Development Regulations 2004. It will be important to ensure that stakeholder organisations with interests and responsibilities in the historic environment, at national and local levels, are fully involved throughout the consultation process. To this end, it is important to consult with both the Council's own conservation officer or team and local amenity societies. In terms of the general requirements of consultation in relation to the historic environment, I attach a Note on Consultation with the Heritage Sector and a list of national amenity bodies.</p>	Noted.
Natural England	<p>Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. We are supportive of the principle of meaningful and early engagement of the general community, community organisations and statutory bodies in local planning matters, both in terms of shaping policy and participating in the process of determining planning applications.</p> <p>We regret we are unable to comment, in detail, on individual Statements of Community Involvement but information on the planning service we offer, including advice on how to consult us, can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals.</p>	Noted.

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	<p>We now ask that all planning consultations are sent electronically to the central hub for our planning and development advisory service at the following address: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. This system enables us to deliver the most efficient and effective service to our customers</p>	
Surrey County Council	<p>Thank you for consulting Surrey County Council on the Surrey Heath Statement of Community Involvement. We do not have any comments to make.</p>	Noted.
Waverley Borough Council	<p>Thank you for giving Waverley Borough Council the opportunity to comment on the above consultation. We have concluded that we do not wish to comment on any specific issues. However we look forward to hearing from you regarding future consultations.</p>	Noted.
Windlesham Parish Council	<p>At a meeting of this Council held on Tuesday 26th November, the draft Statement of Community Involvement was considered by Councillors and I am now submitting this representation on behalf of my Council.</p> <p>As a general comment, if the SCI is concerned with the promotion of effective public participation, then consideration should be given to the language that is very often used in consultations. It can often be difficult to understand without a background knowledge of the issues and therefore language and terminology that can be universally understood should be utilised.</p> <p>As a further general comment, consultation responses should allow "free dialogue" boxes, alongside specific and direct questions as</p>	<p>Noted. Consultations often contain technical material and references. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that the documentation is accessible to as wide an audience as possible, there will be instances where the subject areas covered may contain information that requires some additional background reading in order to fully appreciate the subject matter.</p> <p>Noted. During Planning Policy consultations, general comments can be submitted in addition to comments that respond to</p>

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	<p>this Council feels that very often those who respond are being led down certain routes to give a determined response.</p> <p>Finally, consultation material should be distributed as widely as possible and using as many channels as possible. The Council supports the SCI statements that Surrey Heath will explore how best to use digital technology but also want to emphasise that for some residents paper/hard copy formats will always be preferable. Although these are currently provided and sent to local libraries, the signposting for this is not always obvious and could be improved.</p> <p>With regard to planning applications specifically, the Parish Council acts a statutory consultee. There have been issues recently with the migration of data to a new system which has caused access problems and a great deal of difficulty trying to locate all the relevant documents for any given planning application. These issues will hopefully resolve as time goes on. However, the Parish Council Planning Committee have on a number of occasions found that applications have been determined before the 21 day deadline and therefore the Committee has been unable to make a comment due to the timings of committee meetings. The most recent example – planning application 19/2139/LLD – had an expiry date of 4th December. The Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd December would have allowed the committee to make a comment and for it to be submitted in time to be considered. However, the planning decision was made and posted online on 2nd December.</p> <p>The SCI document states that “no application will be determined within a 21-day period from the date on which notification letters are</p>	<p>specific questions. However, in order to encourage comments that are relevant to the consultation material, it is considered useful to include targeted questions located within specific topic areas.</p> <p>Noted. The Council would welcome suggestions for how the signposting for paper copies of consultation material available to residents could be improved.</p> <p>Noted. The Council has migrated its planning applications to a new system as the original software was significantly dated and not supported by its provider. During the transition period, some technical issues may be experienced whilst data is transferred onto the new system. However, this will be temporary and it is anticipated that normal service will resume as soon as possible.</p> <p>Under normal circumstances, consultation letters will be sent out well in advance of the</p>

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	<p>sent out.” These rules need to be consistently followed by planning officers, otherwise the inclusion of the statement in the SCI is misleading.</p>	<p>application’s expiry date, enabling the full 21-day period for responses to be received. Due to extenuating circumstances involving the migration of planning applications to a new system in late 2019, there is a short period where notifications may have been issued later in the application process, thus impacting the timescales for receiving comments. Where it appears that the Parish Council committee date and expiry of a planning application are in close proximity, Surrey Heath Borough Council would encourage Parish Councils to notify the relevant case officer of this potential conflict. In such instances, officers will work with the Parish Council to retrieve any comments on a planning application before it is determined.</p>
<p>Mr D Chesneau</p>	<p>The document is more 'reader-friendly' than its predecessor, and this is to be welcomed.</p> <p>I have three comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Firstly, the concept of 'local representative groups' is rather flawed. Many of the organisations listed towards the end of the document have not been formed to represent anyone. For example, take the University of the Third Age (now formally renamed U3A). Arguably U3A is highly non-representative of local older people - demographically, financially and educationally. Its views may well be useful - but they may not be representative. 	<p>Noted. Amend wording in Appendix 1 to state, “<i>Local equality groups in Surrey Heath</i>”.</p>

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	<p>Also, it does not appear that there is any representative group of Travellers, even though reaching such people is a particular aim of the SCI.</p> <p>- Secondly, headings such as 'When will YOU be involved' are often inappropriate. They may not actually refer to any particular 'you'. Eg who is the 'you' in "Specific and general consultation bodies, identified by the Council as relevant to the context of the SPD, will be notified of the consultation prior to the publication of the document."? In reality, the document is largely a reference document (I trust that the council will use it!) not something to be read from start to finish. It would be better to refer to 'the community' rather than 'you'.</p> <p>- Thirdly, the draft mentions putting documents on the council website a number of times. This is a necessary, but fairly unambitious, way of communicating. Much wider use of the social media is essential to reach most residents these days. This needs to be highlighted, or the document will seem to be out-of-touch.</p>	<p>Noted. Amend Local Equality Groups Table in Appendix 1 of the SCI to include a section for Gypsy and Traveller Groups.</p> <p>Noted. The SCI will be published on the Council's website and available for members of the public and community groups to read. No change required.</p> <p>Noted. The SCI document includes reference to using social media as a means of communication at four reference points in Table 2 - Procedures and Methods for Public Involvement in Local Plans.</p>
Mr S Greenway	Ref. ESSO pipeline replacement. I fear the construction work site in Deepcut will generate an awful amount of traffic to service the scheme now other hubs have been removed. We are already subject to a large amount of extra construction traffic due to the development of the Princess Royal Barracks site which is on-going. Therefore I object to Deepcut being subjected to more construction traffic due to a new project. Please put it elsewhere. Thank you.	Noted. Not within the scope of this consultation on the SCI.
Ms C Kingsley	1. The Contents list: Page 17 is listed as containing Minor Developments, Smallscale Major Developments and Largescale Major Developments.	Noted. Amend SCI document to add definitions for Small Scale Major Development and Large Scale Major Development at Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms for Community Involvement.

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	<p>2. Page 17 Para 5.3 Major Developments does not mention Smallscale or Largescale, never mind explaining what these are! Please include clarification of how these are defined.</p> <p>3. Table 5 suggests measures for involving the public in different scale developments, but again does not specify what these are. This needs attention.</p> <p>4. For Local Plan consultations, perhaps mention of a recommended time scale for notification of the public would be good. 'In a timely manner' perhaps? The last Local Plan consultation was 'advertised' in Heathscene only a few days before the consultation ended. Public displays of information were few, were not publicised sufficiently and finished weeks before many people realised they were happening. If the Council is serious in wanting to involve the public in plan-making, a lot more needs to be done to communicate effectively with residents. Not everyone uses social media and the Council needs to consider this.</p>	<p>Table 5 of the SCI refers to the steps in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Table 6 refers to small scale major development and large scale major development. Amend SCI document to add definitions for Small Scale Major Development and Large Scale Major Development at Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms for Community Involvement.</p> <p>All Local Plan consultations will be advertised on the Council's website, social media platforms, and local libraries and parish council offices, prior to commencement of the consultation, in accordance with Table 2 of the SCI: Procedures and Methods for Public Involvement in Local Plans. Public exhibitions and drop-in events will also be publicised through these channels. Heathscene magazine is produced quarterly, and therefore due to possible conflicts in timetabling, it will not always be possible to include reference to a Local Plan Consultation within Heathscene, prior to its commencement. However, the Council will endeavour to provide information about upcoming Local Plan consultations within the Heathscene magazine wherever feasible. Further engagement techniques may also be</p>

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		employed by the Council, as set out at column 2 row 4 of Table 2 of the SCI.
Mr N Lennox	<p>It would be good to within this document define the levels of response that would indicate a positive consultation has been achieved. It is not acceptable to say that a document or policy has been “consulted on” merely because it has been through a process. If there has been very few responses further action should be taken to gain additional responses or to seek community involvement.</p> <p>A level of 5 - 10% of the impacted populations should be seen as a target response.</p> <p>As an example the recent consultation on the draft local plan was very poorly responded to as it was not well publicised or promoted and feedback was only passively sought. For a document that is as important as this active feedback needs to be sought and communities need to be engaged.</p>	<p>Noted. The Council will endeavour to publicise consultations on Local Plan documents with a range of outreach methods as outlined in Tables 1-4 of the SCI document. This complies with the Council's legal and statutory requirements for consultation. The methods of outreach include using social media, the Council's website, documentation in parish councils and libraries, and any further engagement techniques deemed appropriate.</p> <p>Whilst it is the Council's aim for consultations to reach as many members of the public, businesses and organisations as possible, the Council is not subject to target levels of response and can only encourage involvement in public consultations. Public participation in consultations is not mandatory, and it would therefore be ineffective to set specific response targets.</p> <p>All Local Plan consultations have been promoted in accordance with the engagement methods set out in the SCI at the time of that consultation. The Regulation 18 Local Plan 2018 consultation received 1,273 comments from 387 separate individuals or organisations.</p>

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Mr G O'Connell	<p>General: The SCI revised draft is rather mechanistic and not very user-friendly. It seems to provide a basic framework to meet the legal minimum rather than aspiring to best practice. The focus is more on allowing individuals and groups to comment rather than true engagement and involvement. There is a real opportunity here for SHBC to step up and be proactive in seeking meaningful inputs from across the community.</p> <p>Table 2: At the Issues & Options stage it states that the LPA may employ further engagement techniques. This is no mention under what circumstances and is too weak. At the very least it should state that the LPA will 'undertake workshops with key stakeholders and may subsequently employ further techniques (such as those cited) dependent upon the feedback from the workshops.</p> <p>A draft of the Local Plan should be available for comment. This is implied but is not explicit.</p> <p>Table 3: How you will be involved in the Draft SPD indicates a number of methods but none of them specifically relate to under-</p>	<p>Noted. Community engagement is a crucial element of the plan making process. The SCI sets out how the Council will involve the community in the preparation of the Surrey Heath Local Plan, the determination of planning applications and the preparation of neighbourhood plans. This includes contact and engagement through a range of methods. Efforts will also be made to involve hard to reach groups, as set out in the SCI.</p> <p>Noted. Examples of the further engagement techniques that may be employed are listed at column 2 row 4 of Table 2. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops for key stakeholders • Presentations to parish councils • Major articles in Council's Heathscene magazine to all households • Issue press release(s). <p>It is not possible to predetermine which additional engagement techniques are most appropriate to employ, as this will depend on the content of the specific Local Plan consultation.</p> <p>Noted. Amend Table 2 column 2 row 4 in the SCI to include the following wording: <i>"Make Local Plan documentation available to view as part of the consultation."</i></p> <p>Noted. The SCI references the consultation of general consultation bodies in Table 2:</p>

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	<p>consensus on how the plan will contribute towards ever greater environmental protection and a zero carbon future.</p> <p>3.6: having 'an Officer Response to representations' is sensible and appropriate. However, such responses are often reflective of the internal, official perspective and can be seen by the public, rightly or wrongly, as lacking the challenge, dynamic insight and community voice. As second, independent assessment of the representations would help inform the executive and offer greater balance.</p> <p>5.21: This rightly states that the Council cannot require a developer to involve the local community. However, it could go on to say that the Council will conduct its own consultation in certain circumstances such as for large or controversial schemes and for areas where local views are crucial (eg certain S106 issues that are outside the area where the planning application has been advertised). Take the case of the planned traffic lights in Frimley Green. No notices were placed on the Green because the planning application location was in Deepcut. Consequently Frimley Green residents were not consulted or engaged on this issue which has led to a protracted battle that could have been averted if there had been proper consultation at the outset.</p>	<p>Therefore it is not appropriate to include specific reference to climate change within Table 4, in isolation of other evidence base topic areas. However, as part of the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council will be producing a climate change evidence base study. In turn, this will inform policy making in the Local Plan which will be subject to the consultation processes set out in the SCI.</p> <p>Noted. The Local Plan is a Council document. Therefore it is deemed most appropriate for the Council's Planning Policy officers to respond to representations made during consultations, and to provide recommendations to the Council's Executive Committee.</p> <p>Noted. No change. Paragraph 5.21 of the SCI refers to what developers are not required to do at pre-application stage specifically. Pre-application is a paid service provided by the Council for applications for potential future schemes in the Borough, and as stated in paragraph 5.16 of the SCI, are treated as confidential. It is therefore not within the Council's powers to consult on pre-application documentation submitted by developers. In addition, the release of material from the Council could prejudice the</p>

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	<p>Table 6: This states possible methods which is fine. However, it would be useful for there to be further explanation below this table to emphasise that these tools will be used to illicit local knowledge, legitimate concerns, constructive ideas and meaningful engagement rather than simply comments and views. The key here is not just about listing a set of tools but committing to using them in line with best practice to get high quality information and involvement.</p> <p>Appendix 1: General Consultation Bodies should include, explicitly, local bodies that represent residents. This is weakly implied but should be spelled out. If you want to include an example I'd suggest The Mytchett, Frimley Green & Deepcut Society.</p>	<p>Council's position as decision maker for any forthcoming planning application at the site.</p> <p>Noted. Table 6 provides an indication for how applicants can involve members of the public at pre-application stage. Paragraphs 5.17 and 5.18 of the SCI provide an overview of the possible approaches that applicants could take to community engagement. However, there are no specific requirements or policies for applicants or developers to involve the public at pre-application stage, as it is a voluntary part of the planning process, and is not mandatory. It is therefore not within the scope of the SCI to dictate how the methods in Table 5 should be used; rather it is at the applicant's discretion.</p> <p>Noted. The definition of General Consultation Bodies is defined in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which has been directly quoted in the SCI. Voluntary bodies are included within the definition. The Council has employed this definition, for consistency with national planning law. Appendix 1 of the SCI will be amended to add a footnote reference to The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.</p>
Ms J Sherrard-Smith	A lengthy, dry, formal document seeking community involvement! Make it easier to read, keep it simple.	Noted. Central government consultations are not within the scope of the SCI. It is a

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	<p>Exampe: RE: telecommunication masts, antennae and cell deployment to support 5G and extend coverage: What information do / did you share with the general public about the UK Government consultation on proposed reforms to permitted development rights to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage that ended on 4th Nov 2019.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-permitted-development-rights-to-support-the-deployment-of-5g-and-extend-mobile-coverage</p> <p>What information are you sharing with the public about 5G? 5G as a military grade pulsed microwave system / use of LED lights in lamposts / health & safety issues including non-ionising radiation sickness & electromagnetic sensitivity / insurance and liability / impact on climate crisis - removal of trees, increase in use of power by IOT / environmental impact including aesthetic impact, damage to wildlife / monitoring, evaluation and regulation of EMF's / etc Please ensure the public are kept informed about the roll-out of wi-fi & 5G technology.</p>	<p>requirement for the SCI to set out how the Council will involve the community in the preparation of the Surrey Heath Local Plan, the determination of planning applications and the preparation of neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>Where appropriate, Local Plan documents will include policies in relation to the implementation of 5G. Furthermore, the Council will seek to include policies in relation to loss of trees and climate change in the Local Plan. This will be consulted on in accordance with the methods set out in the SCI. It is not within the scope of the SCI to set out how information will be provided about central government consultations. However, efforts will be made by the Council to promote central government consultations that are relevant to Surrey Heath through the Council's media outlets.</p>