

## **Surrey Heath Statement of Community Involvement**

### **Summary**

This report seeks adoption of the Surrey Heath Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) following consultation.

The SCI sets out how the Council will involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation of the Surrey Heath Local Plan and in the determination of planning applications. Consultation on the SCI took place in November-December 2019. A further targeted consultation took place in June-July 2020 to take account of subsequent changes to the document that were made to reflect social distancing measures in response to Covid-19. This report outlines the proposed changes resulting from both consultations.

**Portfolio:** Planning and People

**Date Portfolio Holder signed off report:** 18 September 2020

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), as set out at Annex 1 to this report, be adopted.

#### **1. Resource Implications**

- 1.1 There are no resource implications beyond that provided for within the agreed budget for 2020/21.

#### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 It is a legal requirement for the Council to have an up to date Statement of Community Involvement and to make it available on the website for the public to access.
- 2.2 The current SCI was adopted in 2017. In view of the progression of the Local Plan, it is appropriate to ensure that it is robust and up to date. This is particularly relevant, as at independent Examination of the Local Plan, the Inspector will consider whether the Council has carried out consultation in accordance with the approach set out in the SCI.
- 2.3 The SCI sets out:
- The statutory background;
  - The purposes of Community Involvement;
  - Requirements and potential methods of public involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan and associated documents;

- Support for neighbourhood plans;
  - The process for consultation on planning applications.
- 2.4 In September 2019, the Executive agreed to a six-week consultation on the Draft SCI. The consultation took place in November and December 2019.
- 2.5 Following consultation there have been a number of minor changes to the SCI, 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, Annex 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, Annex 1 – Amend title of Local Equality Groups Table to *“Local Equality Groups in Surrey Heath”*.
  - Page 23, Annex 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, Annex 3 – Add definition for Large Scale Major Development to Glossary of Terms for Community Involvement.
  - Page 27, Annex 3 – Add definition for Small Scale Major Development to Glossary of Terms for Community Involvement.
- 2.6 The Local Plan Working Group considered the revised SCI including post consultation amendments at the 10 February 2020 meeting and had no further suggested changes to make.
- 2.7 A further targeted consultation was undertaken in June and July 2020 on additional minor changes to the Statement of Community Involvement that were made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing measures.
- 2.8 Following the further targeted consultation a few additional minor changes to the SCI were made, as follows:
- Front cover – Amend title of document to say, “Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Revised Version including amendments in response to Covid-19 **or similar health or security challenges that may arise**”
  - Page 6, paragraph 1.11 – Amend first sentence as follows: “As the SCI had not yet been adopted the Council took the opportunity to review the SCI in the light of Covid-19 restrictions, **also having regard to the possibility of similar health or security challenges that may arise.**”

- Page 7, paragraph 1.14 – Amend last sentence as follows:  
***“Where social distancing measures and other restrictions relating to Covid-19 are no longer in place, the methods of consultation applied through this SCI will revert to the general requirements in this document, without the need to comply with any additional legislation associated with Covid-19, or similar health or security challenges.”***
- Page 9, Table 1, column 4, row 4 – Add footnote 6 reference to state ***“Where it is deemed possible to do so whilst complying with government guidance and any relevant legislation for social distancing requirements in place at the time of publication.”***
- Page 10, Table 2, column 2, row 2 – Amend footnote 7 to say, “Workshops to be held subject to being able to adhere to Covid-19 legislation and guidance including on social distancing, ***or any future legislation and guidance issued for similar health or security challenges that may arise.***”
- Page 11, Table 2, column 2, row 3 – Amend last sentence of footnote 9 to say, “If it cannot be complied with due to government legislation and guidance on Covid-19 and social distancing measures ***or any future legislation and guidance issued for similar health or security challenges that may arise***, the Local Plan process will be delayed until the requirement to make documents available can be met.”
- Page 13, Table 3, column 2, row 2 – Amend footnote 13 to say, “If it cannot be complied with due to government legislation and guidance on Covid-19 and social distancing measures ***or any future legislation and guidance issued for similar health or security challenges that may arise***, the consultation process will be delayed until this requirement to make documents available can be met.”
- Page 20, paragraph 5.1 – Amend fourth sentence as follows:  
“Where the process of consulting on and determining planning applications is affected by legislation and guidance relating to Covid-19 ***or similar health or security challenges that may arise***, the Council will ensure that those requirements are met which may result in some minor amendments to the process and procedures set out below.”
- Page 23, Table 6, title – Amend footnote 23 to say, “Subject to complying with legislation and guidance relating to Covid-19 ***or any future legislation and guidance issued for similar health or security challenges that may arise.***”

2.9 The SCI has also been updated to reflect the temporary Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, that are in force until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. This enables consultations on Local Development Documents to continue without having to comply with the requirement to make hard copies of documentation available for inspection, so long as they are available on the Council’s website.

### **3. Options**

3.1 The options for the Executive to consider are:-

- (i) To **AGREE** to adopt the updated Statement of Community Involvement.
- (ii) To **NOT AGREE** to adopt the updated Statement of Community Involvement.

### **4. Proposals**

4.1 It is proposed the Executive adopts the Statement of Community Involvement. This is to ensure compliance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

### **5. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities**

5.1 The SCI supports the objective for Place and People through engagement with local communities on planning matters.

### **6. Policy Framework**

6.1 The SCI, on adoption, will support the preparation of the Local Plan and associated documents and the Development Management process and will therefore have implications for future local community engagement.

### **7. Legal Issues**

7.1 It is a legal requirement for the Council to prepare an SCI.

### **8. Consultation**

8.1 The draft SCI was subject to public consultation in accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Development) (England) 2004 (as amended) following agreement by the Executive. The consultation ran from Tuesday 5th November until Tuesday 17th December 2019. A Statement of Consultation has been prepared is attached at Annex 2 of this report.

8.2 A further targeted consultation was undertaken in June and July 2020 on additional minor changes to the Statement of Community Involvement that were made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing measures. A Statement of Consultation for the further consultation has been prepared is attached at Annex 3 of this report.

<b>Annexes</b>	Annex 1: Revised Surrey Heath Statement of Community Involvement Annex 2: Statement of Consultation for the SCI Annex 3: Statement of Consultation for the SCI version with amendments in response to Covid-19 or similar health or security challenges that may arise
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Author/Contact Details</b>	Chris Kirk – Senior Planning Officer <a href="mailto:christopher.kirk@surreyheath.gov.uk">christopher.kirk@surreyheath.gov.uk</a>
<b>Head of Service</b>	Jenny Rickard – Executive Head of Regulatory