



Submission Surrey Heath Local Plan (2019 – 2038)

STATEMENT of COMMON GROUND SCG010

with Woking Borough Council



November 2024

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD
Planning.consultation@surreyheath.gov.uk



Contents

STATEMENT of COMMON GROUND SCG010.....	1
Contents.....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background	4
3. Cooperation to date.....	5
Record of engagement.....	5
Regulation 18 Representations	6
4. Pre-Submission Surrey Heath Local Plan Representations	8
5. Outcomes	9



I. Introduction

- I.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) has been prepared jointly between **Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC)** and **Woking Borough Council (WBC)**. It sets out the agreed position as at November 2024 in relation to relevant cross boundary strategic planning matters. It has been prepared to support the Submission Surrey Heath Local Plan (2019 – 2038) (Local Plan) and has been agreed by both SHBC and WBC and demonstrates ongoing co-operation between the two Parties in line with the requirements set out below.
- I.2. Under Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011) and in accordance with paras. 24-27 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023), it is a requirement under the duty to cooperate for a local planning authority to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in the preparation of development plan documents and other documents. This is a test that local authorities need to satisfy prior to the local plan examination stage and is an additional requirement to the test of soundness.
- I.3. The duty to cooperate applies to strategic cross boundary matters (those that might apply are set out in para. 20 of the NPPF). The statutory requirements of the duty to co-operate are a legal obligation although it is not a duty to agree. Co-operation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters in accordance with national planning policy, as further explained in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- I.4. The Council published a Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance, July 2024 alongside the Pre-Submission Surrey Heath Local Plan setting out how the duty had been met to date. An Update to the Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement has been prepared for Submission of the Surrey Heath Local Plan setting out how the Council has continued to engage with relevant duty to cooperate bodies since July.
- I.5. SHBC intends to submit the Local Plan for Examination in line with the current Local Development Scheme, 2024. However, just prior to publication of the Pre-Submission Local Plan the Government published a number of proposed planning reforms and changes to the NPPF. Under the draft transitional arrangements, and having regard to the proposed submission in Winter 2024/25 it is expected that the Local Plan will be examined under the NPPF 2023. For both local authorities proposed changes to the standard method would result in a significant increase in the housing need. This uplifted need will be considered through the preparation of future Local Plans.



2. Background

2.1. Woking Borough adjoins the southern boundary of Surrey Heath. Like Surrey Heath it has significant areas designated as Green Belt and is also affected by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. There are a range of potential strategic cross boundary matters that affect the two authorities. The Surrey Heath Duty to Cooperate Scoping Framework identifies all strategic cross boundary matters as being relevant.

- Matter 1: Meeting Housing Needs
- Matter 2: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Matter 3: Economic Growth
- Matter 4: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- Matter 5: Natural and Historic Environment and Green Belt
- Matter 6: Flooding
- Matter 7: Transport
- Matter 8: Social Infrastructure
- Matter 9: Utilities
- Matter 10: Climate Change

2.2. WBC adopted the Woking Core Strategy in 2012, for the period up to 2027. The Development Management Policies DPD was adopted in 2016 and Site Allocations DPD was adopted in 2021. The Council intends to prepare a new local plan under the new Plan making arrangements.



3. Cooperation to date

Record of engagement

- 3.1. Table 6 of the Council's Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement, July 2024 sets out cooperation with each relevant duty to cooperate body during the Plan making process. In summary, engagement with WBC has entailed:
- June 2018 - Consultation on the Surrey Heath Local Plan Issues and options
 - December 2020 - Letter to WBC regarding potential unmet housing needs and the need for Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) capacity
 - July 2021 - virtual officer meeting
 - October 2021 – Letter to WBC regarding identified unmet general housing needs and unmet gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople needs and whether WBC is able to help meet those needs and WBC response.
 - Spring and Summer 2022 – Draft Regulation 18 Local Plan consultations
 - Spring and Summer 2022 – WBC response to Preferred Options Additional Site Allocations for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Reg18. No response received to Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.
 - August 2022 – Letter to WBC regarding meeting unmet Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs and WBC response
 - September 2023 – Briefings attended by WBC on the Strategic Highway Assessment Report (SHAR) and Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs.
 - September 2023 – draft SHAR sent to WBC for comment.
 - October 2023 - Letter sent to WBC regarding unmet Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs and WBC response
 - May 2024 – Virtual officer meeting – see paragraph 3.9 below
 - July 2024 – Letter from SHBC Portfolio Holder to WBC Portfolio holder regarding help with unmet Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs
 - August 2024 - WBC response to July Portfolio letter
 - August 2024 – Publication of the Surrey Heath Pre-Submission Local Plan
 - September 2024 – WBC response to the Pre-Submission Local Plan
 - November 2024 – agreement to this Statement of Common Ground.
- 3.2. In addition to the above, WBC is part of the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Partnership Board and Surrey Planning Working Group.



Regulation 18 Representations

3.3. WBC responded to the Gypsy and Traveller Additional Site Allocations consultation in 2022. No response was received from WBC in relation to the Draft Local Plan consultation in 2022.

3.4. Fuller summaries of the representations along with SHBC's response can be found in Appendix 5 to the Consultation Statement, July 2024.

3.5. Key cross boundary matters raised by WBC were:

Gypsy and Traveller Additional Site Allocations (2019 – 2038)

■ Woking's Site Allocations DPD (2021) allocated sites, including through Green Belt release to meet Woking's Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs, however no surplus sites were identified and WBC is unable to assist in meeting any unmet needs in Surrey Heath.

3.6. With regards to meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, SHBC has set out through letters, duty to cooperate meetings and briefings, the challenges in finding sufficient sites to meet identified needs. This has included approaching neighbouring authorities on a number of occasions to see if they could help provide for any unmet needs. Most recently Surrey Heath's Homes, Planning & Enforcement Portfolio Holder wrote to all neighbouring authorities Planning Portfolio holders in July 2024 to again determine whether any unmet needs could be met. In response to this letter Woking again confirmed that it was unlikely that there would be any additional capacity beyond the local authority's existing obligations.

3.7. In the absence of sufficient identified sites to meet needs, the Council has amended a number of Policies including Policy H9 Rural Exception Sites, and H11 Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to provide a more permissive approach that encourages unallocated sites to come forward to meet future needs.

3.8. As noted in the Outcomes of the May 2024 officer meeting below, WBC has welcomed this approach whilst noting there remains an unmet need.

3.9. In May 2024 a virtual officer meeting was held to discuss the representations made by WBC on the Draft Local Plan and to discuss the emerging Pre-Submission Local Plan. The outcomes of this meeting summarise the agreed position on strategic cross boundary planning matters prior to pre-submission.



Outcomes - SHBC and WBC virtual officer meeting 13 May 2024

- SHBC updated WBC on their Local Development Scheme.
- WBC highlighted that the authority intends to produce a new Local Plan under the new plan-making arrangements. Update Nov 2024 - However, as the publication of the regulatory requirements have been postponed by 12 months, WBC are progressing under the current system, LDS to be reported to Members in December 2024.
- In relation to the forthcoming publication of the Surrey Heath Local Plan Pre-submission version, it was noted that:
 - ◆ no unmet needs for housing supply in Surrey Heath, as shortfall has been agreed to be addressed via agreement with Hart DC.
 - ◆ no request from SHBC for WBC to support Surrey Heath in supply of employment floorspace, as residual forecast need for industrial and logistics floorspace is relatively modest and residual forecast need for office floorspace is not considered to be representative of actual market demand
 - ◆ no request from SHBC for SANG capacity to be provided by WBC
 - ◆ whilst it is recognised that there are unmet needs, the flexible Policy approach explained in the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople briefing is welcomed
 - ◆ Transport Assessment concluded that there are no significant adverse effects on the highways network in Woking, arising from Surrey Heath site allocations including in combination with Woking Local Plan development.
 - ◆ Habitat Regulations Assessment including Appropriate Assessment, concluded no adverse impact on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
 - ◆ SHBC and WBC agreed that at the current time there are no outstanding cross boundary issues that would affect the SHLP, with the exception of meeting needs for Gypsy and Travellers.
- A Statement of Common Ground [this document] will be drafted later in 2024, prior to Submission of the Local Plan.



4. Pre-Submission Surrey Heath Local Plan Representations

4.1. WBC responded as follows to the Pre-Submission Local Plan:

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Reg 19 consultation document. We have worked together through duty to cooperate and have documented our engagement. As a result, Woking Borough Council fully supports your draft plan and look forward to seeing it progress to Examination and adoption in due course.”

SHBC Response

4.2. SHBC welcomes this response.



5. Outcomes

5.1. As a result, both authorities agree that:

- there are no unresolved cross boundary strategic matters that affect the delivery of the Surrey Heath Local Plan 2019 – 2038.
- Surrey Heath has complied with the legal duty to cooperate.
- WBC has made clear through the plan – making process that it is unable to meet any unmet market needs or unmet needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.
- Constructive joint working will continue on relevant cross boundary matters including the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and in progressing future Local Plans.

And both authorities note:

- the Government’s proposed transitional arrangements set out in the draft NPPF, 2024 and proposed uplifted housing need.

Signatories

Woking Borough Council	
-------------------------------	--



Name	Jill Peet
Position	Planning Policy Manager
Date Agreed	25/11/2024
Signature	

Surrey Heath Borough Council	
Name	Gavin Chinniah
Position	Head of Planning, Housing, Corporate Enforcement and Parking (interim)
Date Agreed	25/11/2024
Signature	

