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Sent by email to: clerk@chobhamparishcouncil.org

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Dear Sir or Madam

Surrey County Council Response to the Chobham Neighbourhood Plan Consultation (Regulation 14)

Thank you for consulting Surrey County Council (SCC) on the Chobham Neighbourhood Plan. This is an officer response and our comments set out below relate to SCC's roles and responsibilities.

Our key concern is the proposal to designate Wishmore Cross Academy field and Playing Field west of High Street as Local Green Spaces. Education land is fully protected under statute and is not open space that is fully accessible to the public. We therefore object to the proposals to designate these two sites as Local Green Space. Further details are provided below.

Local Planning Policy

There has been an omission of all Surrey County Council Development Plan Documents (DPDs) from the Development Plan list for Surrey Heath. Accordingly, paragraph 1.8 on page 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan should include the below documents:

- Surrey Waste Local Plan 2019 (December 2020).
- Surrey Minerals Plan Core Strategy 2011 (July 2011).
- Surrey Primary Aggregates Development Plan Document 2011 (July 2011).
- Surrey Minerals Site Restoration Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (July 2011).
- Surrey Aggregates Recycling Joint Development Plan Document 2013 (February 2013).

Sustainability and responding to the climate emergency

We welcome the reference to Surrey's Climate Change Strategy and the role of planning in achieving net zero carbon, however we would recommend that paragraph 3.2 includes an objective about the Neighbourhood Plan supporting the delivery of net zero, for example all new buildings to be net zero operationally.

Energy efficiency and design

Policy CH4 states that proposals should incorporate sustainable design features “where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, landscape and views”. This might affect the ability to install solar panels and other forms of renewable energy generation. Therefore, it would be useful for the plan to highlight alternative renewable energy options such as solar roof tiles, which can be encouraged where conventional solar panels are considered to conflict with other plan policies.

In policy CH4 2(a) to optimise passive heat gain, reduced fabric heat loss should be prioritised so that incidental room heat gains can become primary heat sources.

Policy CH4 should promote the use of high levels of thermal insulation and airtightness for all building types to limit the installed peak heat loss, typically to ~10W/m². The insulant should be chosen to achieve the lowest practicable U-value.

We note that paragraph 5.20 refers to the introduction of the Future Homes Standards in 2025 and that fossil fuel heating (such as gas boilers) will be banned in new homes. We would recommend a statement in policy CH4 which refers to the Future Homes Standard.

We welcome the supporting document: Chobham Design guidance and codes and are pleased to see that the document includes some consideration of energy efficiency and sustainability in the design code. We would recommend that the codes include specific technical specifications for energy efficiency, for example setting the target energy consumption of 35 kWh/m²/yr. In addition, further guidance could be provided on how, for example, Air Source Heat Pumps and renewable energy generation can be included in designs.

Flood Risk

We would recommend that in the justification section for Policy CH5 reference is made to SCC being the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). SCC is designated as a LLFA by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Further details in relation to our role can be found here: [Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surrey-local-flood-risk-management-strategy).

We note that information and a map have been included on fluvial flooding. We would recommend that information and/or maps are included regarding surface water flood risk within the Chobham area. Information is provided by the Environment Agency: [Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk)

Following paragraph 5.39 we would recommend that a paragraph is included on riparian owners and the maintenance of watercourses. A riparian owner is the person, or people, with watercourses on, next to or under their property. Riparian responsibilities usually lie with the person who owns the land or property but may be the tenant depending upon the agreement in place. Reference should be made to the [living next to a watercourse SCC Guidance](#) and the need for [Ordinary Watercourse Consent](#) for any changes to watercourses.

We would recommend that as well as referring to Policy E6 of the emerging Local Plan in paragraph 5.43, there is also reference to paragraph 175 of the NPPF, which states that *‘Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.’*

To provide clarity, we would suggest that the following text is added to paragraph 5.44: *‘Aside from the control of surface water flows, the SuDS approach also provides benefits in terms of water quality and multifunctional biodiversity and amenity improvements.’* Also, the following text should be added to paragraph 5.45 *‘...Chobham, this might be achieved by maximising the use of “natural” SuDS features, including but not limited to swales, streams, storage ponds, reed beds and bunds.’*

We would recommend adding details in paragraph 5.47 to the SCC pre-application service in relation to the management of surface water:

[Planning Advice - Sustainable Drainage Systems \(SuDS\) - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

[Sustainable Drainage System Design Guidance - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#).

Point 3 of policy CH3 should be amended to state: ~~The hierarchy of discharge option preference is:~~ **Surface water should be managed and discharged in accordance with the drainage hierarchy and the** definitions for SuDS and LLFA included in the Glossary.

We would recommend that Wayne Purdon, Surrey Heath Drainage Engineer is specifically consulted in relation to this section. Wayne is extremely knowledgeable and will have a lot of local information.

Conserving heritage assets

We welcome the treatment of the historic environment in the Neighbourhood Plan. We note that there is a strong heritage thread running through the document, as well as a dedicated heritage section. We welcome the references to the historic environment not only in the preamble and the heritage policy, but also specific accommodation in the community "Vision" (Objective 2), and the policies on development location (CH1), character and design (CH3), energy efficiency (CH4) and the village centre (CH7). The inclusion of a specific policy on views and vistas is particularly welcome, as is the fact that much of the guidance and reference material cited within the Neighbourhood Plan refers to locally-specific material such as the *Chobham Design Guidance and Codes*, meaning that the developmental cues for the area will reflect the local character appropriately.

We are pleased to note that the heritage section and policy will complement the policies set out in the Surrey Heath Local Plan and that reference is made to the Surrey Heath version of the Locally Listed Heritage Assets list. We are also pleased to note that reference is made to archaeology.

Policy CH6 (2) refers to "...a *Heritage Statement or similar*..." should be prepared to support an application possibly affecting archaeological remains. Whilst correct, the NPPF term for this document would be a "Desk-Based Assessment" when specifically relating to archaeology. A heritage statement is a more general document. We would recommend that this is changed to avoid the commissioning of the wrong type of survey.

Figures 9 and 10 show the heritage assets referred to in the text. The Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) sitting within Chobham village centre is difficult to see on these maps. We would recommend the inclusion of a separate heritage map rather than combining it with the character areas. Also, both maps are using the old AHAP and County Site of Archaeological Importance (CSAI) layer, which was replaced last year following a county-wide revision. To make sure the Neighbourhood Plan is accurate when the final version is published, we would recommend re-consulting the Surrey Historic Environment Record for the most up-to-date information on these designations. There are a few changes in the Chobham area which will be important to take into account.

Green and Blue Infrastructure and Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain

As responsible authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), SCC welcomes and supports the content of Policy CH10: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain. SCC's Natural Environment team has some minor comments relating to the plan.

In Table 4, paragraph 7.5, under SSSI it states that Chobham Common is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. Please can this be reworded as SCC manages the sites public access and Surrey Wildlife Trust manages the conservation of the site?

In Policy CH10, we recommend that the word 'nesting' is removed from the sentence in section f) as bats roost rather than nest. We would also recommend adding reference to the LNRS in section 4 of Policy CH10. A requirement of the Environment Act 2021 is the production of a LNRS in a collaborative and evidence-based manner and the engagement

process for this commenced in 2023, with the strategy being scheduled to be complete by 2024. We would welcome Chobham Parish Council's involvement in this process to ensure local opportunities for nature recovery are identified and linked into a network for greater ecological resilience.

Local Green Spaces

We note that policy CH11 proposes to designate Wishmore Cross Academy field, Playing Field west of High Street and Little Heath grass areas as Local Green Spaces.

Wishmore Cross Academy is a secondary school and playing fields. SCC own the freehold, but the entirety is held by the Academy Trust under a 125-year lease. Playing Field west of High Street is a grass playing field used by the children of St Lawrence school. Appendix D states that Playing Field west of High Street is owned by St Lawrence School. This is incorrect, since although Playing Field west of High Street is used by St Lawrence School it is owned by SCC. Please could this be corrected?

SCC supports the protection of green spaces. However, education land is fully protected under statute and is not open space fully accessible to the public. Local Green Spaces are usually available for public use and so such a policy might conflict with the schools' safeguarding and community shared use arrangements. We therefore object to the proposals to designate Wishmore Cross Academy field and Playing Field west of High Street as Local Green Space.

Whilst designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present, if they were to be designated any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiations.

We would also like to see the plan acknowledge that exceptions to Policy CH11 might be acceptable where schools need to expand for operational reasons and as a last resort the only land available may comprise part of an existing playing field. There may be rare circumstances where the most sustainable option is to expand a school on at least part of a school playing field site, where this is to meet residents' needs and deliver sustainable development, community wellbeing and life-long learning objectives. Any such circumstance would need to ensure that any adverse effect on the function and character of open space be minimised. Clearly playing fields should be protected from loss to development, however *'Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach'* to meeting the requirements for a sufficient choice of school places for existing and new communities. As per Paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework, *'Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.'*

Walking, cycling and equestrian opportunities

We note that reference is made to the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The Surrey Heath LCWIP is currently being finalised. The draft Plan identifies key walking and cycling corridors and prioritises a programme of active travel infrastructure improvements in the borough. The draft LCWIP identifies a Phase 1 (priority) core walking zone in Chobham which may provide opportunities to review and design walking infrastructure improvements. It also identifies Phase 2 cycling corridors (second category of prioritisation) along the A3046 (which is consistent with proposal D on page 80 of the Neighbourhood Plan) and A319 into Chobham.

We would recommend that reference is made to [Healthy Streets for Surrey](#), which is the county's street design policy adopted in 2022 and now presented as a webtool. Its contents must be integrated into any design code included in the Neighbourhood Plan for new developments and street retrofit/ redevelopment situations.

In Surrey, we want streets that are welcoming, safe and attractive for all to access and enjoy. Our Healthy Streets for Surrey raises the standard of street design, creating streets

which are safe, green, beautiful, and resilient in line with the ambitions of the Community Vision for Surrey 2030.

It includes national and local guidance and policies and is presented as:

- **'Musts'** (mandatory requirements)
- **'Shoulds'** (requirements that require justification to deviate from)
- **'Coulds'** (recommendations for street design in Surrey)

We would also recommend that reference is made to the [Rights of Way Improvement Plan \(ROWIP\)](#), which is a statutory document. The present document runs from 2014-24 and we are in the process of reviewing and writing the ROWIP for 2024-34. Information regarding this is found through the above link. It is important that this document is referenced as part of any neighbourhood plan regarding public rights of way or as part of any reference to policy CH14 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Parking

Paragraph 8.18 refers to SCC's 'Vehicle, Cycle and Electric Vehicle Parking Guidance for New Development' (September 2021). SCC's Transport Development Planning team have produced a revised version of this parking guidance, dated February 2023, a copy of which is attached. This paragraph should be amended so that it refers to the most recent up-to-date guidance and Table 6 should be updated i.e. removing the brackets for 1 & 2 bed houses, 3 bed houses and 4+ bed houses.

As Chobham is largely a rural parish with a high level of car ownership, Policy CH15 should include a requirement for Electric Vehicle charging points to be provided within all new residential developments, in accordance with SCC's Parking Guidance (pages 12-17), paragraph 116(e) of the NPPF 2023, and to help meet the objectives of LTP4.

Policy CH15 states that new residential developments should provide adequate space for cycle parking and storage. This should also include a requirement for the provision of a charging point with timer for electric bikes adjacent to any cycle parking facilities. In most residential settings, the provision of e-bike charging points could also be used for the charging of mobility scooters.

I hope these comments are helpful. If you require further information, please contact Nikki Nicholson at nikki.nicholson@surreycc.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Nikki Nicholson
Principal Planning Officer