

Crawley²⁰²⁹

September 2013

Additional Site Consultation Overall Summary

Introduction

The additional site consultation is the third public consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Local Plan.

The Local Plan is a document that will set out how Crawley should manage the development of land within its boundary to ensure that planning decisions will meet the needs of people living and working in the town today and in the future.

Following feedback from previous consultation about things the town will need in the future as well as information gathered through studies that have been undertaken by the council, additional sites were identified for possible development. The proposed sites focus on providing land for the development of more housing, developing a new cemetery for the town as well as allocating land for a permanent gypsy and traveller site. The consultation also included questions about land that might be designated as a Local Green Space as well as considering what should or shouldn't be designated as a historic park and garden.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek views and opinions about what sites should be included in the final local Plan document that goes forward for inspection in 2014.

How could people take part in the consultation?

The consultation ran initially for four weeks, from 3 June until 1 July 2013.

As with previous consultation exercises people were given options as to how they could get involved; recognising that people like to take part in different ways. The consultation was widely publicised through different channels to try and get the message out to as many people as possible. The table below outlines how people could take part in the survey and the communication plan which supported the consultation.

How could people take part in the consultation?	How did people find out about the consultation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a survey online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A briefing was held with the local press at the beginning of the project. The press then followed the consultation during the four weeks with different elements being publicised each week.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print a hard copy of the survey through the website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The consultation was promoted through Twitter and the council's Facebook page. An article also appeared in Crawley Live.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact the council to request a copy of the questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-mail alerts were sent out to people telling them about the consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email or write directly to the Forward Planning Team at the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Posters were displayed in the neighbourhood parades.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard copies of the questionnaire were sent to 1,000 residents randomly selected through the billing system. Hard copies of the survey were also available at both libraries and at the Town Hall. People requesting a survey were also sent a hard

How could people take part in the consultation?	How did people find out about the consultation?
	copy of the questionnaire.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected members were briefed on the consultation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter was sent to a small number of properties around the affected areas to alert them to the consultation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site notices were displayed around the sites.

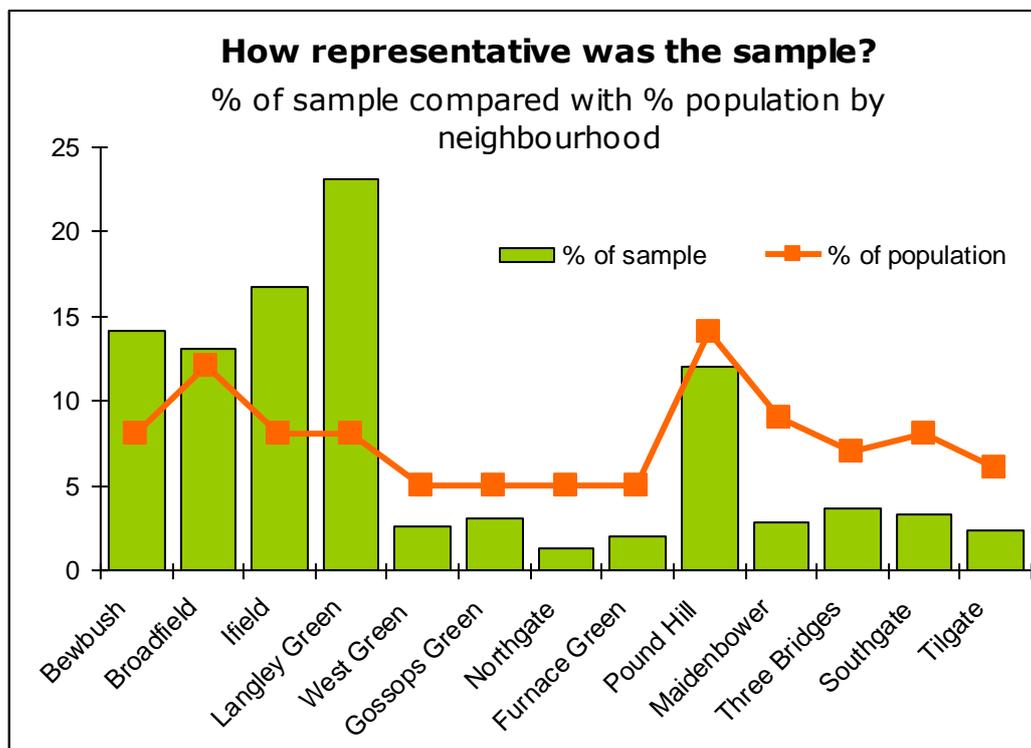
All communication and publicity materials relating to this consultation can be found in Appendix E.

Who took part in the consultation?

2068 people took part in the consultation. This represents a significant increase in participation compared to the previous two consultation exercises. 113 took part in the Issues and Options stage (first stage- identifying the issues) and 215 people took part in the Preferred Strategy stage (second stage – exploring the solutions to the issues identified).

Of the 2068 people who responded to the consultation 1,889 (91%) lived within Crawley with the remaining 179 (9%) living outside the town. Although not all respondents indicated which neighbourhood they lived in 67% (1,261) of those people living in the town did.

While respondents were drawn from across all neighbourhoods, the graph below illustrates that some neighbourhoods were over represented compared to other areas.



What this indicates is that although the development of the Local Plan is something which will inevitably shape the future look and feel of the town as a whole this consultation was about specific sites which became a local issue that attracted local interest. Local people in the areas directly affected by the proposals were more likely to take part in the consultation than people living in other neighbourhoods across the town.

Neighbourhood	Additional site proposal
Langley Green	Permanent gypsy and traveller site
Ifield	Cemetery
Broadfield	Permanent gypsy and traveller site
Bewbush	Housing development
Pound Hill	Removal of historic park designation

It should be noted that the Langley Green Forum held one of its regular meetings during the time of the consultation.

Attendance at this meeting was high. This helped people know about the consultation exercise and as

a consequence a high proportion of the overall response rate was drawn from people living in this neighbourhood. These factors need to be considered when reading the results. The survey is not a representative view of all residents living in Crawley.

1990 (96%) of respondents completed the questionnaire as individuals. Only 1% (29) represented an organisation. None of these people lived in the town.

How has information been report?

Recognising that people took part in the consultation because of proposals directly affecting them; some sections of the questionnaire had a higher response rate than others. To ensure that one issue doesn't dominate over another, percentages are based on the numbers of people answering each question rather than the total number of people taking part in the consultation.

Respondents were also asked to provide their postcode. Within each section postcodes received have been mapped, where it was felt to be appropriate. This enables us to better understand how *local* agreement or disagreement was in the areas directly next to the proposed sites.

Overall four reports have been written which are accompanied by an appendix which lists all the comments made under each of the topic areas. In some cases, because comments were considered by the council to be inappropriate, offensive or racist they have had to be removed. The reports include:

- Housing Development consultation report accompanied by Appendix A listing all the comments received
- Gypsy and Traveller Site consultation report accompanied by Appendix B1 and Appendix B2 listing all the comments received.
- Cemetery Site consultation report accompanied by Appendix C listing all the comments received.
- Historic Parks and Garden and Local Green Space consultation report accompanied by Appendix D listing all the comments received.

Key messages

Overall this has been a challenging consultation with some strong opinions being expressed about how land should or shouldn't be used in the future. It has been well supported by local people compared to other stages in the development of the Local Plan although it is not a representative view of all residents. Each report contains a summary that outlines the key messages from each topic that was consulted on. However, looking across the topic areas there are a number of themes emerging that need to be considered going forward. These are reported here.

- Most of the proposals consulted on were not supported by respondents. Comments made suggest that people found change difficult to accept and overall the results of the consultation leave us with the question as to how do 'we grow and rejoice' in the future? Respondents challenged the council to be more creative in how it identifies land for development. Using office space to bring forward housing development, looking outside the boundary of the town or making better use of brownfield sites were given as examples of tackling the problem in a different way. These ideas should be explored first before considering development on green open spaces. The consultation clearly indicates that using open green space to bring forward development is not a popular solution to growth. This point of view was also expressed in the Preferred Strategy consultation earlier in the year.
- Through the consultation people clearly articulated how much open green space means to them; not just from an environmental point of view but also the impact it has on their health and wellbeing. This has been a recurring theme at all stages of the Local Plan consultation. The comments that people made suggest the green spaces in the town were in some way its unique selling point; it was why people settled in the town. They were very reluctant to see this change and wanted to retain this legacy for future generations. Developing on playing fields was unpopular.
- There was strong resistance to the idea of developing a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site within the town. From the comments made it was clear that there was a misunderstanding about who this site was being developed for and why it was coming forward. People, more often than not, talked about the transient travelling community when commenting on the proposals. Some very strong views were expressed without people necessarily realising that the town is already home to a small Gypsy and Travelling community who might be sensitive to the comments made about them. Going forward, the council needs to be mindful of possible community tensions if a permanent site is included in the Local Plan.
- The support for the development of a new cemetery site at Ewhurst Playing Fields was not overwhelming. The issue was not only the location of the site but also the use of a playing field. Respondents challenged the council to look outside its boundary to find space if more was needed or accept that cremation may be the way forward.
- One of the biggest challenges facing the council is how to bring forward development with the support of local communities. The additional site consultation has illustrated that people are generally opposed to development near them. However, sometimes difficult decisions have to be made and development needs to come forward. It is important that if faced with making those hard choices the council work with communities to find workable solutions. In some cases this can be simply providing clear information explaining why and how a decision has been reached, keeping them informed at each stage of the process. In other cases it

may be allowing people somewhere to voice their concerns and working alongside them to try and overcome the issues being expressed. The issue of growth is not going to go away; nothing stands still, but rather than be in conflict with people living and working in the town, the challenge is to work with them to realise the full its full potential.