

It's time to raise your voice!

Do you like to think you've been properly consulted on major planning decisions affecting our community? Of course you do.



Would you be upset if for some reason, you might not be able to have your say? You probably would.



Rutland Council Council (RCC) recently sent all residents in the county a letter in which it explained that you may only be able to respond to its development proposals **ONLINE** in future, as recommended by the government.

This means that, unless you have a smart phone, tablet or computer and a broadband connection, your views won't be heard.

You'll find this news in RCC's proposals to change its so-called Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which is supposed to outline how it engages with you on planning matters.

It says online communication is more appropriate in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, but it's likely the main reason is that the current SCI is out of date (it has not been reviewed since 2014) and needs updating before the revised Local Plan is submitted to the government, because the council needs to show it has fulfilled its obligation to properly consult all parties.

Why does this issue matter?



In our view, because RCC wants to include the proposals to develop a new town of more than 2,200 homes plus business areas and a quarry at St George's Barracks - a development that would totally change the character of rural Rutland - in the next version of the Local Plan. Once it's in the Local Plan, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to influence the outcome.

We believe it's wrong that residents of this village who are not online may lose the opportunity to make their voices heard - especially with such a huge issue like St George's Barracks on the horizon.

Although it has no legal obligation to consult you about changing the SCI, RCC is inviting people to fill in an online questionnaire (www.rutland.gov.uk/sci). In effect, all it does is ask you to tick five boxes either to agree with what it's doing or suggest alternatives. The deadline for responses is 4.30pm on Friday 17 July.

In our view, this is a weak interpretation of consultation. We think the community and its parish councils should be more dynamically involved in shaping this statement. A peer group review last year came to a similar conclusion about RCC's weaknesses on community consultation.

If you feel strongly about making your voice heard, or feel it's important that the whole community is effectively consulted or if you do not have online access, please let us know on the slip opposite and return it by **Wednesday 15 July** to: North Luffenham St George's Barracks Working Group, c/o The Fox, Pinfold Lane, N.Luffenham (drop through letterbox or hand to a member of staff). If you prefer, you can email your response to: timsmith@northluffenham.org.uk We will take up the matter on your behalf.

To find out about the SCI Review and complete RCC's questionnaire, go to : www.rutland.gov.uk/sci



To learn more about the newly-launched Fight4Rutland campaign, go to: <https://fight4rutland.org>

IT MATTERS! FIGHT FOR RUTLAND!

Response Form

YOUR NAME.....

YOUR ADDRESS.....

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YOUR COMMENTS.....

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I do not have access to the internet but would would like to be consulted by other means. (PLEASE TICK)

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I do have online access but I feel it is important that those without it are effectively consulted. (PLEASE TICK)

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I support Rutland County Council's plans to allow only online responses to consultations in future. (PLEASE TICK)

YOUR SIGNATURE.....