

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STATEMENT

SITE:

131-133, Crockhamwell Road,
Woodley,
RG5 3JP

Proposal:

Subdivision of existing former bank (Class E)
to create multiple Class E commercial units,
including installation of new shopfronts,
external shutters, and metal railings
to secure the parking area.

PREPARED BY:

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1. Introduction

This Community Involvement Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the subdivision of the former bank premises at 131-133 Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, into Five commercial units within Use Class E.

The statement has been prepared having regard to **Wokingham Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**, which sets out how and when the local community should be engaged in the planning process, proportionate to the scale and nature of development.

2. SCI Context and Proportionality

Wokingham Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement promotes **early and proportionate engagement**, particularly where proposals are of a scale or nature that may have a significant impact on the local community.

The proposed development comprises:

- Re-use of an **existing vacant commercial building**
- No increase in overall floorspace
- No change of use outside **Use Class E**
- Minor external alterations to support occupation and security

In accordance with the SCI, it is considered that **formal pre-application public consultation is not required** for minor commercial development of this nature, where impacts are limited and the principle of use is established.

3. Consideration of Local Community Interests

Although no formal consultation exercise was undertaken, the proposal has been developed in line with the SCI's objectives of **transparency, responsiveness, and community benefit**, including:

- Bringing a long-vacant former bank back into productive use
- Supporting **local and independent businesses** through smaller, flexible units
- Increasing activity and **footfall**, contributing to a safer and more vibrant local centre
- Enhancing the appearance of the street frontage
- Reducing the risk of anti-social behaviour associated with vacancy

These outcomes directly support the SCI's aim of ensuring development contributes positively to local places and communities.

4. Addressing Potential Community Impacts

The proposal has been carefully designed to limit any potential impacts on nearby occupiers and users of the area, in line with the SCI's emphasis on considerate development:

- Continued use within **Class E**, ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses
- No intensification beyond what is typical for a local shopping parade
- Security shutters and metal railings proposed to protect property and improve safety
- Existing parking arrangements retained and secured to prevent misuse
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Any representations received during the statutory consultation period will be fully considered, consistent with the processes outlined in the SCI.

5. Ongoing Engagement

The applicant acknowledges the role of the Local Planning Authority in consulting statutory consultees, neighbours, and stakeholders in accordance with the SCI.

The applicant remains committed to working proactively with the Council and responding constructively to any feedback or concerns raised during the determination of the application.

6. Conclusion

This Community Involvement Statement has been prepared in accordance with **Wokingham Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement** and reflects a **proportionate approach to engagement** for a minor commercial planning application.

The proposed development will deliver clear community benefits by reactivating a vacant building, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the vitality of the local centre. The level of community involvement undertaken is appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal and fully aligns with the expectations set out in the SCI.