

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE Issues & Options Consultation August 2016

What is this consultation about?

This Issues and Options consultation is about seeking people's views on producing a Local Plan Update (LPU) for Wokingham Borough. It is a scoping and shaping stage to understand what should be included within the plan and set up a direction of travel.

What is a Local Plan?

The Council is responsible for plan making, which includes producing plans for how an area will develop over time as a guide to future development.

Why do we need the Local Plan Update?

One of the key reasons for needing the Local Plan Update is that the Government has changed the way that we plan for development, particularly for new housing. Previously, numbers of new houses required were set at regional level (in a document called the South East Plan) for each authority. However, now it is the responsibility of individual local authorities to assess how much development is needed in its area and how much should be provided.

How do I get involved?

Consultation on the Issues and Options document runs from Thursday 4 August to 4pm on Friday 30 September 2016.

You can find all of the documents on the Council's website at www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate.

Please read the Issues and Options document alongside the following survey and add your comments for each question. If you do not have a comment on a particular question, please leave blank and you will be able to continue to the next page. If you would like to save the form and continue at a later stage, please click on the 'save for later' button and you will be emailed a link to your saved form.

Please note:

- *Comments received after 4pm on Friday 30 September 2016 will not be able to be considered.*
 - *All comments received will be made publically available, but personal details will be removed prior to this.*
 - *Anonymous comments cannot be accepted and will not be considered.*
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1. Contact Details

Name: Peter Must

Are you responding as a:

- Resident in Wokingham Borough
- Resident in neighbouring Borough
- Local Authority
- Statutory Body
- Councillor / Clerk
- Society / Community Group ✓
- Business / Agent
- Landowner
- Other interested party

Please specify.....

Job title / role (if applicable): Chairman

Organisation name (if applicable): The Wokingham Society

Address: 8 Albert Road, Wokingham

Postcode: RG40 2AL

Email address: chairman@wokinghamsociety.org.uk

Please tick here if you would like to be added to our consultation database

How did you hear about this consultation?

Letter

Email

Newspaper Advert

Press release

Council's Website

Twitter / Facebook

Other (please specify)

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2. Vision, Objectives, Time Period for Plan and Spatial Strategy

QUESTION 1: *Imagine it is 2036 and Wokingham Borough is the best place to live and an even better place to do business. What does it feel like, what can you see and hear and what are you doing?*

A Wokingham town centre still focussed on the Market Place with the surrounding streets still clearly being a conservation area, hosting a mixture of businesses which respect the town's heritage while serving the needs of the local community. The streets are pedestrian-prioritised, and there are plants, flowers, seating and signage to welcome visitors.

QUESTION 2: *Considering these three pillars / roles, what are the most important things to you in creating the Wokingham Borough of the future?*

Talking about Wokingham Town, a low-crime, community-friendly, pedestrian-prioritised, un-littered environment with good footfall for all businesses and at least as much green space as at present, well-maintained and fully used for both events and relaxation.

QUESTION 3: *Do you have any comments regarding this proposed time period for the Local Plan Update? No*

(Up to 2036)

QUESTION 4a: *Which option should the Council use for where development should go (its spatial strategy)?*

Option 1: Continue the approach of a small number of large developments that provide for their own infrastructure needs based on garden town/village principles

Option 2: A large number of smaller developments around the Borough

Option 3: Do nothing and let the market dictate when and where development will take place

Option 4: Focus development at existing larger settlements

Option 5: Focus development at existing smaller settlements

Option 6: A combination of some / all of the above approaches

QUESTION 4b: *Are there any other options that we should be considering?*

As in the previous Managing Development Delivery Plan and in the forthcoming Local Plan Update, sustainable locations should also be identified for smaller developments.

3. Housing

QUESTION 5a: *Do you agree that we should plan to provide for the existing and future housing needs of people, as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment?*

Yes ✓

No

QUESTION 5b: *How should we best plan to provide for these needs?*

Through the current and future consultations about the Local Plan update

QUESTION 6: *Do you think we should have a policy to ensure that a range of homes are provided? If not, what approach should we take?*

Yes ✓

No

QUESTION 7a: *What policies are needed to ensure we seek to meet this need for affordable homes?*

No view

QUESTION 7b: *On what size schemes, i.e. at least X, should we require affordable homes to be provided?*

10 or more

QUESTION 8a: *The Government is currently proposing that developments of 10 homes or more should provide 20% Starter Homes. If local authorities are given some discretion do you agree with this threshold or should we be looking to provide a different standard?*

Agree ✓

Disagree

There is no provision to offer views on Questions 8b, 9a and 9b below, but our response would be to propose that the Council should do both in each instance

QUESTION 8b: *If there is discretion for local authorities to set their own Starter Home policy, should land be allocated for Starter Homes or should they be integrated within new developments?*

Yes – they should be allocated

No – they should be integrated within new developments

QUESTION 9a: *Should specific land be allocated for self-build plots or should they be integrated within new developments?*

Yes – they should be allocated

No – they should be integrated within new developments

QUESTION 9b: *Should specific land be allocated for affordable self-build plots or should they be integrated within new developments?*

Yes – they should be allocated

No – they should be integrated within new developments

QUESTION 10: *Do you have any further views regarding provision of gypsy and traveller sites?* No

QUESTION 11a: *Should the Council have a specific policy about accommodating Older People's Housing Need?*

Yes ✓

No

QUESTION 11b: *Should the Council have a specific policy which supports proposals for accommodation for other vulnerable groups?*

Yes ✓

No

4. Employment and Retail

QUESTION 12: *Should the Council be more flexible in its approach to where employment growth should occur and the types of jobs that are considered to be employment uses?*

Yes ✓

No

Please explain how?

Such growth should relate closely to housing policy, provision and location.

QUESTION 13: *Do you think we should continue to apply the same policy approach to retail development?*

Yes ✓

No

If not, how else do you think it could be delivered?

5. Infrastructure and Community

QUESTION 14a: *What do you consider are the essential items of infrastructure necessary to support new communities?*

Good roads (for both vehicles and cycles), public transport, free parking, schools, health provision, community centres, accessible shops, green space within walking distance

QUESTION 14b: *Do you consider that the Council should require developers to contribute towards maintaining infrastructure and over what time period?*

Yes ✓

No

Please explain if you wish to.

With particular reference to roads, the Council should include in a S38 agreement a reasonable commuted sum to offset future maintenance costs for adopted roads provided by the developers, to meet any expenses rising from defects attributable to the original work.

QUESTION 15: Should the Council continue the policy approach of allowing the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land as long as a suitable alternative is provided? If not, what approach should we take?

Yes

No ✓

Please provide any further comments you have.

This has resulted in such provision being located beyond reasonable walking distance from a development, or parts of it, or merely being sited somewhere else completely, to the detriment of residents. The Council should require any such facilities to be within walking distance.

6. Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage

QUESTION 16a: Do you agree with the current approach to flooding; minimising the risk of flooding and guiding development towards areas of lowest flood risk first?

Yes ✓

No

If not, what approach should we take?

QUESTION 16b: Do you think that the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should be required on all residential development including Minor applications for 1-9 dwellings? If not, what approach should we take?

Yes ✓

No

If not, what approach should we take?

7. Countryside

QUESTION 17: Should we continue to use our existing approach to managing development in the countryside?

Yes

No ✓

If not, what approach should we take?

It is not clear what the Council's current policy is. Policy CPII - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside) in the Core Strategy appears to be the only statement on this issue and a more distinct and transparent policy should be provided, particularly within the Update documentation in due course.

8. Green Belt

QUESTION 18: *Are there locations within the Green Belt for sustainable development that would warrant us looking at altering the Green Belt boundaries?*

Yes

No ✓

Please provide any further comments you have.

There is little enough Green Belt in the area. Using non-Green Belt open space for future development should suffice

9. Natural Environment

QUESTION 19: *Do you agree with the Council continuing this approach to protecting designated nature conservation sites? If not, what approach should we take?*

Yes ✓

No

If not, what approach should we take?

10. Heritage & the Historic Environment

QUESTION 20: *Do you agree that we have got the right level of protection for our heritage assets?*

Yes

No ✓

If not, what approach should we take?

a) The Council should reinstate the requirement for planning applications relating to listed buildings and conservation areas to be clearly identified in the application, and in the way such applications are listed for the public to see. It is at present all too easy for this factor to be overlooked and applicants are not likely to volunteer this information themselves.

b) The Council has committed to measures to protect pubs but has not delivered on these, and the overly-strict procedures for considering community asset nominations are against the spirit of the legislation.

c) Rather than merely redirecting people to the English Heritage record of listed buildings, and to Berkshire Historic Environment Record, the Council should compile its own record of the buildings and locations within the Borough that appear in these websites. This would help to demonstrate that the Council is both aware of and keen to conserve the places listed.

11. Sustainable Design

QUESTION 21a: *Should we 'opt in' to the tighter Building Regulations requirement for water efficiency?*

Yes ✓

No

If not, please explain why.

QUESTION 21b: *Should we specify what proportion of new housing should be within Categories 2 accessible and adaptable dwellings and 3 wheelchair user dwellings?*

Yes ✓

No

If not, please explain why.

QUESTION 21c: *Should we 'opt in' to central government's minimum living space standards?*

Yes ✓

No

If not, please explain why.

12. Other policy areas

QUESTION 22: *Are there any other areas that you would like to see dealt with in the Local Plan?*

Yes ✓

No

Please provide any further comments you have.

We would strongly urge the Council to apply Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework within the Local Plan update by providing for the identification for special protection green areas of particular importance to the local community. This would entail proposing and/or consulting about appropriate locations for listing in this way. Of particular interest within Wokingham Town would be the new park to be created from existing open space at Elms Field but others might wish also to nominate their own cherished green spaces.