

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Local Plan Update – Revised Growth Strategy consultation (November 2021)

#### Q. What is the Local Plan Update?

A. The documents in which the council's planning policies are set out are known as local plans. The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update will contain new planning policies providing a framework to guide development in the borough up to 2038 (the end of the plan period). It will identify how much new development is needed up to 2038 and allocates sites to meet that need. It will also guide the location, scale and type of future development, and includes detailed development management policies for making decisions on planning applications.

#### Q. What stage of the Local Plan are we at?

A. We consulted on a Draft Local Plan from February to April 2020, where the central part of the plan's strategy was the creation of a new garden town at Grazeley. The Draft Plan was an initial stage of the process and is an important stage of plan-making, formally known as a Regulation 18 consultation under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Subsequent to agreeing the Draft Local Plan, a change in legislation has resulted in the redetermination of the Urgent Action Area and the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone around AWE Burghfield. The change means that the Grazeley garden town proposal, and therefore the strategy proposed by the Draft Local Plan, is no longer possible.

#### Q. What is the purpose of this consultation?

A. The purpose of the consultation is to seek people's views on a Revised Growth Strategy. The revised spatial strategy retains the key principles, vision and objectives set out in the Draft Local Plan Update, which was consulted on in February 2020.

The main changes to the approach that was consulted on in February 2020 are:

- The removal of the Grazeley garden town
- A new strategic allocation to create a garden village on land south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham, referred to as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley
- Additional housing within the South Wokingham major development
- Additional smaller development sites within and adjacent to a number of villages across the borough
- Additional allocations for Local Green Space across the borough, and
- The extension of the plan period from 2036 to 2038

We are now asking for people's views on our updated approach to that these can be considered before we move to confirm our proposed approach strategy, which is then tested by a government appointed Planning Inspector.

#### Q. What about other areas of policy such as climate change?

A. The Draft Local Plan (2020) set out a range of policies aimed at reducing the environment impact of development and respond to the challenge of climate change. We proposed to continue the broad approach set out in these policies. This includes the clear commitments to:

- net zero carbon development
- biodiversity net gain
- affordable housing
- high quality design
- health and wellbeing; and
- active transport, including walking and cycling

There is no need for anyone to resubmit comments on these other matters. A wide range of comments were submitted in response to the full Draft Local Plan and are being actively considering.

For further detail, please see the climate change section below.

**Q. How do I get involved / how long is this consultation for?**

**A.** Public consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy is from Monday 22 November 2021 with the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document and supporting documentation being made available on our website. We would welcome people reviewing the Revised Growth Strategy and letting us know what they think, and if they would do things differently saying what they would do.

Comments should be received by us no later than 5pm on Monday 24 January 2022.

A postcard has been circulated to households across the borough providing details of the consultation and how to respond. The consultation was advertised in ‘The Wokingham Paper’ and on the council’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

There will be a series of virtual and in-person events where the council’s planning officers will be available to help you, however to minimise the spread of Covid-19, the two in-person events are held in larger venues to allow for greater circulation space. The dates and locations are:

<b>When</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>What Time</b>
Monday 22 November 2021	<b>St Crispin’s School, Main Hall</b> London Rd, Wokingham RG40 1SS	7pm – 9pm
Tuesday 30 November 2021	<b>Arborfield Green Leisure Centre</b> Sheerlands Road, Arborfield RG40 1SS	7pm – 9pm
Thursday 2 December 2021	<b>Online information session</b>	6pm – 7pm
Thursday 2 December 2021	<b>Online information session</b>	7:30pm – 8:30pm
Monday 6 December 2021	<b>Online information session</b>	6pm – 7pm
Monday 7 December 2021	<b>Online information session</b>	7:30pm – 8:30pm

To book your place at one of our consultation events, please visit our online engagement portal at:

<https://engage.wokingham.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/right-homes-right-places-local-plan>

We would encourage you to submit your comments online using our consultation portal at:

<https://engage.wokingham.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/right-homes-right-places-local-plan>

Alternatively, you can submit your comments:

- By email to: [LPU@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:LPU@wokingham.gov.uk)
- By post to: Growth & Delivery Team, Wokingham Borough Council, Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1WR

If you wish to respond by email or in writing, we have prepared a response form to help you structure your comments. This can be found the website.

**Q. I took part in the 'Draft Local Plan' consultation in February 2020. What are the results of this? How have they been used? Where can I find them?**

**A.** The council prepared and consulted on a Draft Local Plan in February 2020. The Draft Local Plan has regard to the views and preferences expressed through earlier consultations and technical evidence.

Around 5,000 comments were received to the Draft Plan consultation from just over 700 individuals and organisations.

We have published a high-level summary of the matters raised through the Draft Local Plan consultation and the report is available on the council's website at:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=545605>

The Revised Growth Strategy focuses on those policies which relate to the scale and pattern of development, particularly where land is proposed to be allocated for development. Therefore, the Revised Growth Strategy retains the key principles and allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan, however has been updated to reflect a different pattern of development across the borough (the Revised Spatial Strategy).

**Q. I commented on the proposed allocations in the first Draft Local Plan consultation, do I need to submit my comments again?**

**A.** It is not necessary to resubmit previous comments, however, we would encourage everyone to review the updated assessments and other information and provide new comments as appropriate.

The Draft Local Plan we consulted on in February 2020 proposed 21 smaller sites for residential / mixed development. We have reviewed all of the comments received in response to that consultation and have recommended that all of these sites are retained within the Revised Growth Strategy. In some instances, the indicative minimum capacity has been changed to reflect constraints or to pursue opportunities for higher densities.

The Revised Growth Strategy consultation is supported by an updated assessment of all sites across the borough, which is set out in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

We would encourage everyone to review the updated assessments and respond to this consultation.

**Q. Why is the council preparing a new local plan?**

**A.** Having a local plan is a statutory requirement and the Government has made it clear that local plans should provide a positive vision for the future of the area. It is important that the council has robust planning policies which reflect national policy and guidance. Producing a new local plan supports the council's aim of having a plan-led approach to development. Without effective planning policies we will be unable to guide where development happened and coordinate investment infrastructure. Without an effective local plan, it is more likely that development will happen in unsustainable places and put pressure on existing services and facilities.

## **Future development**

### **Q. What are Wokingham Borough's future housing needs?**

The Government expects local authorities to enable land to come forward to build a scale of housing calculated by a standard method.

This standard method currently calculates the housing need for Wokingham Borough to be 768 dwellings a year. Over the plan period of 2018/19 to 2037/38 this equates to 15,513 dwellings.

The 15,513 figure uses the housing need as calculated by the standard method at the time for years:

- 2018/19 – 864 dwellings
- 2019/20 – 804 dwellings
- 2020/21 – 768 dwellings

### **Q. How many new homes are being planned for in the Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy?**

**A.** About 5,700 new homes over the plan period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2038 – the rest of the homes are those already allocated in our current local plan.

### **Q. How will the council decide where development should go?**

**A.** The council has invited landowners and developers to put sites forward for future development. We have assessed the suitability of each site through a comprehensive approach, including extensive public consultation.

Following the decision not to proceed with the scheme at Grazeley, we have had to look at alternative strategies for the local plan, which has included reassessing the ways in which we could manage development.

To inform this process, an updated Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)<sup>1</sup> is published in line with a methodology agreed by the Berkshire authorities. This document sets out the site appraisal process. We have also conducted various other technical studies which form the 'evidence base' to the Revised Growth Strategy, including transport modelling, amongst many others. Masterplanning work was also undertaken for the identified area at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley and additional housing within the South Wokingham major development.

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<sup>1</sup> Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (January 2020), available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/draft-local-plan-consultation/?categoryesct191f252ff-550d-4cfa-a838-92ef2cb5f83c=10726>

All documents and the results of previous consultations are available to view and access on our website at: [www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate).

**Q. How has land promoted for development been assessed?**

**A.** The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment provide an individual site assessment of each housing site, gypsy and traveller site and other mixed-use sites (including employment, leisure and retail). The assessments are ordered alphabetically by site reference numbers within each Appendix.

**Q. If sites are identified in the 'call for sites' exercise and are being assessed does it mean that they will be allocated for development in the Local Plan?**

**A.** No. All sites are considered as part of preparing the Local Plan, through the site assessment process. Being assessed does not mean that a site will be allocated for future development. Indeed many sites were found to be unsuitable for future development

**Q. Does this mean that sites not proposed for allocation will not be developed?**

**A.** Landowners are entitled to object to the exclusion of their site through the plan-making process and can submit planning applications separately to the local plan process.

By having a new local plan, the council will be able to ensure that most planning decisions for future development are made in accordance with it. However, in some circumstances planning applications will be assessed on their individual merits and therefore development may occur in other areas for specific reasons.

In instances where the council refuses a planning application, the applicant is entitled to appeal against the refusal. In these cases, the final decision does not rest with the council, but with an independent Planning Inspector.

**Q. Where will the new homes go?**

**A.** The development strategy set out in the Core Strategy Local Plan is working to meet a large part of the housing needs. To plan for the long term up to 2038, new land for development is needed. The Revised Growth Strategy therefore includes a substantial garden village of about 4,500 homes on land to the south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham (known as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley). At least 2,200 homes would be built during the plan period to 2038, with the remainder to be delivered in the longer term. In addition to meeting a substantial amount of the borough's housing needs, the Hall Farm / Loddon Valley garden village will also accommodate employment needs provided by a range of science and technology, film studios, educational and health uses at Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park.

The Revised Growth Strategy also proposes a number of smaller allocations for new homes, where suitable, across our towns and villages.

In this plan period (up to 2038):

- At least 2,200 new homes at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley garden village
- Just over 900 additional new homes at South Wokingham major development
- About 2,700 new homes at other sites identified in our towns and villages across the borough

- About 1,100 new homes that aren't allocated, but that we expect to come forward through planning applications (this is an approximate forecast based on past trends)

## Local Green Space

### Q. What is a Local Green Space?

A. National planning policy provides for an optional designation of Local Green Space (LGS). This allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. The Draft Plan proposed the designation of 12 areas as Local Green Space.

Following the Draft Plan consultation, the council proactively wrote to town/parish councils and local amenity groups to enquire whether they wished to nominate any additional areas. As a result, over 100 nominations were received. All sites have been assessed against national planning policy/guidance, complying with the relevant criteria. Over 70 areas are proposed for designation in the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document.

All site assessments are set out in the Local Green Spaces Topic Paper which is available to view and access on our website: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/local-plan-update/>.

### Q. Does land proposed for a Local Green Space need to be in the council's ownership?

A. National guidance clarifies that a Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. The Council contacted the relevant landowners (in advance of the Revised Growth Strategy consultation) to inform them that land within their ownership had been nominated for Local Green Space designation.

Landowners have a further opportunity to comment on the proposed Local Green Space designations in their response to the Revised Growth Strategy consultation.

## Infrastructure

### Q. How will existing infrastructure and services cope and what new infrastructure and services will be provided to support the growth?

A. All new development, housing in particular, will contribute to the delivery of appropriate infrastructure (such as roads, schools and community centres) either directly or through a financial contribution. The council is already working closely with the relevant agencies to ensure that the exact infrastructure requirements of specific sites can be understood. We have prepared the Revised Growth Strategy with engagement from service and infrastructure providers.

By planning new housing properly, ensuring developers pay for the facilities needed and seeking upfront infrastructure funding, the council would be able to ensure the new or expanded facilities necessary are in place as the new homes are built.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is an iterative document that sets out the infrastructure types and projects that can support and help to mitigate future development.

**Q. Who will pay for all the infrastructure and facilities that need to be built with the new homes?**

**A.** Almost all of the infrastructure and facilities would be paid for by developers through a Community Infrastructure Levy for each house they build, currently around £47,000 per house on average.

To support the proposed Hall Farm / Loddon Valley Strategic Development Location, the council has bid for forward funding from the Government that would, if successful, allow infrastructure to be built at the start of the development – ahead of the housing.

**Q. How will services such as schools cope with extra demand?**

**A.** By planning new housing properly, ensuring developers pay for the facilities needed and seeking up-front infrastructure funding, the council would be able to ensure the new or expanded facilities necessary are in place as the new homes are built.

**Q. The roads are already congested, how will they cope with more traffic from development?**

**A.** The council understand that many people own and regularly drive cars, and this can lead to areas of congestion, particularly during peak times. The Revised Growth Strategy has been produced to help tackle congestion by creating a sustainable garden village with excellent public transport links so residents have a real alternative to the car.

The Revised Growth Strategy is also supported by transport modelling evidence to help understand and assess the transport impacts from proposed growth in the local plan. The transport modelling work has also considered growth from committed development and highway infrastructure improvements from neighbouring authorities.

Information regarding proposed new transport schemes is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). Further work regarding infrastructure, including relating to highways, will be undertaken as the Local Plan progresses.

## **Climate change**

**Q. What is Wokingham Borough Council doing to tackle climate change?**

**A.** In July 2019 the council declared a [climate emergency](#). This commits us to playing as full a role as possible in reducing our carbon footprint to be net zero by 2030. The actions we intend to take to achieve this are set out in the [Climate Emergency Action Plan \(CEAP\)](#).

**Q. How can local plans support the climate agenda**

**A.** Local plans play a key role in ensuring new development is delivered in a way that responds to the challenges of climate change. The LPU will introduce a range of measures to support the goals of the CEAP, including:

- Locating most development in places that reduce people’s need to use their car for unnecessary journeys and provides opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport
- Ensuring new buildings are designed and constructed to reduce their environmental impact, including requiring development to be net carbon zero, measures to avoid overheating in the

summer and heat loss in the winter, and the use of rainwater harvesting systems to reduce water use

- Encouraging the installation and use of renewable energy generation within the borough
- Requiring electric vehicle charging points to be installed in all new developments

#### **Q. Can local plans address climate change on their own.**

**A.** Unfortunately, the answer is no. There are limitations to what a local plan can do. For example, local plans concern new development and can have no influence over homes and other buildings that already exists. Also, the de-carbonisation of the national grid is beyond the scope of local plans as national policy is needed to end the burning of fossil fuels nation-wide.

So, there will be many improvements that will require leadership from central government and revised legislation beyond planning (such as building regulations) to be introduced in order for improvements to become compulsory.

#### **Q. What are we doing to ensure the LPU delivers the highest standards of sustainable development?**

**A.** The Draft Local Plan contained a range of policies relating to climate change and sustainable development. Planning policies introduce at a strategic level a framework to ensure new development is net zero or as close to as possible. However, it is not the role of policies to dictate the finer details such as building materials that need to be used, construction methods, exact numbers of solar panels, etc. Key policies in the Draft Plan are:

- SS8 Climate Change
- SS9 Adaptation to Climate Change
- DH7 Energy
- DH8 Env Standards for Non-Residential Development
- DH9 Env Standards for Residential Development
- DH10 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation
- NE1 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- NE8 Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
- NE9 Sustainable Drainage

We have commissioned climate change evidence to support the production of the LPU. The purpose of this evidence is to review whether the policies included in the Draft Plan are as robust as they can be. Drawing on best practice, guidance and legislation, the evidence will make recommendations about where we have got our draft policies right, and where we can strengthen them to ensure the growth planned for within the LPU is delivered as close to net zero as possible.

Ultimately, a government planning inspector will examine our proposals and decide if we can adopt them. If you agree with what we propose it is important that you tell us.

#### **Q. How will LPU policies ensure buildings are built to net zero standard?**

**A.** The Draft Local Plan included a policy requiring all housing developments of 10 or more homes to achieve net zero standard. We intend to continue this approach into the next stages of the plan making process. Policy will require Energy and Climate Statements to be submitted with a planning application which demonstrate how the development would achieve net zero carbon and how monitoring and reporting on performance will be delivered.



For development of 9 or fewer homes, we recognise net zero may be harder to achieve and may inhibit small local builders delivering homes within the borough. The Government has proposed a [Future Homes Standard](#) which should ensure all new homes produce 75-80% less carbon. These standards are intended to come into force in 2025. As this is likely to be only a couple of years after the LPU is adopted, we are likely to expect that all small housing proposals meet these standards as a minimum in the interim before they become mandatory once they are adopted into building regulations.

For non-residential development, the Draft Plan proposes to require that developments demonstrate and achieve certain BREEAM standards. BREEAM is a worldwide recognised sustainability assessment method that covers a broad range of sustainability themes which ensures a robust approach to sustainability measures. We intend to require developments to demonstrate compliance with these standards at the planning stage and also post occupancy to ensure the performance is as expected.

As a last resort, when on-site carbon savings measures have been maximised and where a development cannot demonstrate net zero carbon can be met on-site, we intend to require contributions to a Carbon Offset Fund. The funds can be used to deliver a range of projects identified across the borough, ideally focusing on opportunities to cross-subsidise the interventions identified in the WBC Climate Action Plan.

#### **Q. How will climate change policies be tested?**

**A.** All local plans are subject to an Examination in Public carried out by a government appointed Planning Inspector. This is to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and a particular test of whether they are 'sound'. A key requirement is to assess viability of the delivery of Local Plans and the impact on development of policies contained within them. We know that developers are likely to challenge our requirements for net zero developments on the basis this makes building more expensive. It is therefore important that we produce robust evidence on viability to demonstrate policy requirements would not prevent development coming forward, all of which will be tested through the Examination.

#### **Q. Will there be an updated Supplementary Planning Document on climate change?**

**A.** Yes. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) add further detail and guidance to the policies in the local plan. They need to be prepared once the policies within the local plan have been agreed, as they cannot introduce new standards or add further detail to policies which don't yet exist.

Therefore, we will produce an updated SPD to support the climate change policies within the Local Plan Update once this has been adopted. This will contain more detail around matters including how we expect new homes and buildings to meet net zero requirements, how development will provide on-site renewable energy and what water conservation measures we will expect.

## **Other matters**

#### **Q. Will the Green Belt still be protected?**

**A.** National planning policy continues to afford the Green Belt strong protection. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Update, the council commissioned a Green Belt review which concluded that all land within the Green Belt in Wokingham Borough made at least a 'contribution' to

the five purposes of the Green Belt<sup>2</sup>. No areas were identified as suitable for removal from the Green Belt, the boundaries were considered to be strong and enduring beyond the plan period.

National planning policy sets out certain exceptions that development in the Green Belt may be appropriate. These include limited infilling in villages of the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites.

The Revised Growth Strategy does not propose to allocate any sites for future development in the Green Belt. We may receive challenges towards this approach from developers and other site promoters through the local plan process, however the council is satisfied that it can meet its housing need outside of the Green Belt through the two proposed Strategic Development Locations and other suitable sites across the borough.

### **Q. What will happen to the council's existing planning policies?**

**A.** The council already has two key planning policy documents that contain planning policies. These are:

- Core Strategy (adopted 2010) – containing the overarching strategic policies (for example setting the number of new homes to be built to 2026)
- Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (adopted 2014), which includes adding extra detail to the policies within the Core Strategy.

Both documents currently form part of the borough's development plan. Once finalised, the Local Plan Update will replace the Core Strategy and the MDD. Until then, the emerging Local Plan Update will be a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications, although the weight it can be afforded at this early stage is fairly limited.

### **Q. How will the council ensure homes are built to net zero standard?**

**A.** National policy requires plans to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The Draft Local Plan included a policy requiring all housing developments of 10 or more homes achieve net zero standard. We intend to continue this approach into the next stage of and we are currently developing evidence to justify local knowledge

However, we are reliant on government to improve standards such as Building Regulations. The Government's proposed [Future Homes Standard](#) should ensure all new homes produce 75-80% less carbon, but it is intended that these standards won't come into force until 2025.

However, plans must also show that development is viable

### **Q. Will there be an updated Supplementary Planning Document on climate change?**

**A.** Yes. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) add further detail and guidance to the policies in the local plan.

We will produce an updated SPD to support the climate change policies within the Local Plan Update once this has been adopted. This will contain more detail around matters including how we expect

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<sup>2</sup> Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council (June 2016) Green Belt Review Final Report available at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/environment-evidence/>

new homes and buildings to meet net zero requirements, how development will provide on site renewable energy, what water conservation measures we will expect, etc.

would not be able to introduce new standards or add further detail to policies which don't yet exist in the development plan. Therefore, the correct procedure would be to update the Local Plan first and for an SPD to follow. Further, even if it were appropriate for an SPD to proceed the LPU, SPDs take time and resource to prepare. To carry as much weight as possible they need to be subject to extensive consultation (potentially including multiple rounds on emerging drafts), require various stages of executive approval (with associated lead in times) so their introduction could not be achieved in the short term. Such consultation would also detract resource away from the main focus of updating the statutory development plan.

### **Q. Will my opinion matter?**

**A.** Yes. The local knowledge of residents and expertise of local businesses and organisations will help to shape and influence how we should best manage development. Whether you object to or support an element of the Revised Growth Strategy, or wish to suggest some changes, we are keen to receive your feedback to help guide future plan making.

### **Q. Can I buy a copy of the Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy consultation document?**

**A.** An electronic copy of the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document and related materials can be downloaded and accessed from the council's website free of charge.

Paper copies (colour) of the main consultation document are available at a charge of £36.35. A paper copy (black and white) is also available at a charge of £9.72.

Total costs will be dependent on the type of finishing and postage.

Copies of the consultation documents and other supporting documentation will also be made available to view at the two in-person consultation events at St Crispin's School, Wokingham and Arborfield Green Leisure Centre, Arborfield.

To book your place at one of our consultation events, please visit our online engagement portal at:

<https://engage.wokingham.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/right-homes-right-places-local-plan>

### **Q. I have some further questions about the consultation, how can I contact you?**

**A.** You can find all of the documents on the council's website at [www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate)

Paper copies of the Revised Growth Strategy are also available to view at the council's offices at Shute End. A leaflet has also been produced and circulated to all households to highlight the key issues.

If you have any questions regarding the consultation, please contact the Growth & Delivery Team on 0118 974 6478 or by emailing [LPU@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:LPU@wokingham.gov.uk).

### **Q. What happens next?**

**A.** All comments generated from this consultation will be carefully read and considered, alongside technical evidence studies, to help us refine our proposed strategy and allocations prior to the plan being drawn together into its full final version next year. We will also produce a statement responding to the issues raised and how we will seek to address them.

Following this consultation, there will be a further round of consultation which will be under 'Regulation 19' of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This is also known as the 'proposed submission' version, which is undertaken before the Local Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State to be examined by an independent Planning Inspector. The Inspector examines the plan to determine if it is considered to be 'sound'.

The current timetable for the draft Local Plan can be seen in the Local Development Scheme on the website at [www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate).

### **Q. Will my comments be made public?**

**A.** The council is required by law to make available the comments you send to us about any consultation on the Draft Local Plan, including your name and postal address. Your comments may be made available for the public to read in council offices and online as part of the Local Plan preparation process. Your telephone number, email address, and signature will not be published. Please note that we cannot provide anonymity or accept comments marked 'private' or 'confidential'.

The council has a duty not to accept comments which may reasonably be considered offensive, racist, discriminatory or threatening. These, along with other non-relevant statements will not be considered or taken into account.

## **Other documents**

### **Q. What is a Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment?**

**A.** There is a requirement to produce a Sustainability Appraisal alongside a local plan. The Sustainability Appraisal assesses the impact of the issues and options identified against a range of social, environmental and economic objectives. This helps us to ensure that our future policies are sustainable, (i.e., they support development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs). This document is available to view as part of the consultation at the same time as the Revised Growth Strategy consultation document and so you may wish to comment on this document as well.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been integrated into the site selection process to inform consideration of which are the most sustainable sites and to test reasonable spatial strategy alternatives.

### **Q. What is a Habitats Regulation Assessment?**

**A.** There is a requirement to produce a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) alongside the Local Plan. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) assesses the impacts of proposals in the local plan against conservation objectives for a European Protected Site, and to consider whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that protected site for its nature conservation. Consultation responses can also be submitted relating to the HRA.

The HRA has been integrated into the plan-making process and has informed policy development in the Revised Growth Strategy.

**Q. What other documents have been published?**

**A.** To inform the consultation various evidence has been published, alongside a series of Topic Papers and Position Papers, which provide additional information and context to the consultation. This addresses matters including air quality, economic development, viability and flood risk, and are available on the website.