

**TO: COUNCIL**  
**1 FEBRUARY 2018**

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**BRACKNELL FOREST LOCAL PLAN  
CONSULTATION ON DRAFT LOCAL PLAN  
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities**

**1 PURPOSE OF DECISION**

- 1.1 The draft Local Plan (LP) will set out a planning framework for the Borough, including new planning policies and the allocation of sites for the period to 2034. This report seeks approval of the draft LP (see Appendix A to this report) and the Consultation Strategy (Appendix B), and for the draft LP to be published for a period of public consultation between Thursday 8 February and Monday 26 March 2018. Approval for the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to be updated and published is also sought.

**2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **That Council agree the draft Local Plan (Appendix A) and Consultation Strategy (Appendix B).**
- 2.2 **That, subject to agreement of the recommendation set out at 2.1 above, the draft Local Plan (Appendix A) and other supporting consultation material be published for a period of public consultation starting on Thursday 8 February and ending on Monday 26 March 2018.**
- 2.3 **That minor changes to the draft Local Plan and other supporting material produced prior to the consultation be agreed with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport in consultation with the Chief Officer: Planning, Transport and Countryside.**
- 2.4 **That Council agree to the Local Development Scheme being updated and published to reflect the timescales set out in this paper.**

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is important that the Council has an up-to-date and robust planning framework to guide development which reflects current national policy and guidance. Production of the draft LP supports the Council's desire of having a plan-led approach to development rather than reacting to developers' proposals. The Government is clear that local authorities should have up-to-date plans and should seek to review plans every five years, or risk Government intervention. The preparation of the LP will support the priorities set out in the Council Plan 2015 – 2019, in particular; 'A strong and resilient economy' and 'A clean, green, growing and sustainable place'.

- 3.2 The Regulations<sup>1</sup> require that the LP is prepared in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The proposed consultation will allow continued engagement and comments received will help inform the content of the final Plan to be submitted to the Government.
- 3.3 Local planning authorities are required to publicise their intended timetables for producing a local plan in their Local Development Scheme, which must be published on the website and kept up-to-date<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The option of not preparing the LP would leave the Council vulnerable to a pattern of development in the Borough being led by developers and landowners through planning applications and potential appeals as policies and allocations would not be up-to-date. It could also ultimately lead to government intervention.
- 4.2 It is a statutory requirement under the planning regulations to carry out proper consultation on the preparation of Local Plans.

#### **5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

##### Background

- 5.1 The Council first set out and approved the need for a new Local Plan in its Local Development Scheme (LDS) in 2015. The reasons given for needing to prepare a LP included:
- Loss of the regional context for the role of Bracknell Forest, following the partial revocation of the South East Plan;
  - To respond to the wider economic context particularly through the role and work of the Local Enterprise Partnership;
  - To ensure compliance and consistency with national planning policy and guidance;
  - To inform the development of Neighbourhood Plans;
  - To provide a robust and up to date evidence base to support planning decisions/defend appeals, and the Borough's planning policies and guidance framework (such as housing, gypsy and traveller needs, affordable housing, retail, employment, landscape and infrastructure).
- 5.2 The current LDS (agreed in 2016) refers to the publication of a draft Local Plan in June/July 2017. This did not happen due to:
- the decision to consult on the content of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in November/December 2016; and,
  - the complexity of technical studies required due to the constraints affecting sites submitted for consideration for development.
- 5.3 Approval is sought to update the LDS to account for an amended timeframe that takes account of site assessment work, site visits, engagement sessions, policy development and evidence gathering. It is also proposed to shorten the Plan period to 2034. This would still allow for a 15 year plan period from submission (in 2018), but, acknowledge the increasing uncertainty towards the end of the period. A future

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

<sup>2</sup> Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

review of the LP would enable these years to be planned for with a more accurate understanding of need.

5.4 The proposed timeframe to be incorporated in the LDS is:

- Full Council – 1st February 2018
- Public consultation (Regulation 18) – 8th February to 26th March 2018 (approximately 6 weeks)
- Submission Plan Executive/Full Council – September 2018
- Publication stage consultation (Regulation 19) – October/November 2018 (6 weeks)
- Consider representations – December 2018/January 2019
- Submit Plan – early February 2019
- Examination – May/June 2019
- Inspector’s Report received – September 2019
- Adoption at Full Council – October 2019

#### The Role of the Local Plan

5.5 The Local Plan, once adopted, will replace the following Development Plan Documents:

- The Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan, 2002 (BFBLP)
- The Core Strategy, 2008 (CS)

5.6 Whilst the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) (2013), will continue to form part of the Development Plan, Policies SA11 – SA13 will be superseded by the Local Plan.

5.7 The LP and the SALP will provide the framework to guide the level and location of development in the Borough up to 2034. They will also include detailed policies to be used in determining planning applications for development. Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan will also remain. The draft LP (see table in Appendix 2 of the LP) sets out which existing policies are being superseded by the draft Local Plan.

#### The draft Local Plan

5.8 The draft LP includes a vision, objectives, and strategy for the level and distribution of development (including housing, and employment development and new infrastructure), site allocations and a suite of development management policies.

5.9 The Plan is informed by national policy and guidance, other local plans and strategies and an extensive evidence base<sup>3</sup> on issues such as:

- housing (including affordable housing) and employment needs,
- flood risk,
- Travellers’ needs,
- infrastructure requirements,
- High level strategic transport modelling,
- Green Belt (including the results of a review),
- landscape and open space.

5.10 Following a period of consultation in late 2016, the Council finalised the Site Selection Methodology in June 2017. This sets out the process by which sites will be

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<sup>3</sup> The evidence base is available to view on the Council website: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/comprehensive-local-plan/evidence-base> Some further studies will be added by the start of the consultation.

appraised<sup>4</sup>. As the basis for identifying sites for the required amount of housing, the Council undertook various 'Calls for Sites' in 2016. The results of this exercise and subsequent analysis are included in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The SHELAA takes a 'policy off' approach, which is why it includes sites in the countryside and the Green Belt. Whilst it includes information on availability, suitability and likely economic viability, it does not allocate sites/broad locations (or clusters) for future development - this is the role of a local plan. The SHELAA Part 2: Results (August 2017) contains 93 potential sites for development. A crude assessment indicates that they have a potential capacity of 9,651 dwellings (net).

- 5.11 Officers visited all SHELAA sites as part of the overall site appraisal process. The SHELAA considered the implications of existing evidence, and helped identify which sites were worthy of detailed assessment. It contains sites located in the Green Belt which are considered further in paras 5.30-5.34. Further site specific evidence was commissioned on sites in the settlement and countryside (which do not benefit from planning permission) to ensure that the comparative assessment of all sites was based on the same evidence. In addition to considering the implications of the results of specialist studies on the capacity of sites and the outcomes of the Issues and Options consultation held in 2016<sup>5</sup>, it has been necessary to take account of requirements for open space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and infrastructure. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been integrated into the site selection process to inform discussions on which are the most sustainable sites and to test reasonable alternatives (see Appendix D).
- 5.12 The results of the site appraisal work concluded that some sites were not suitable for allocation due to location and/or the level of constraints. On other sites, it has become apparent that development should be limited. The net developable area has been calculated for sites/parts of sites considered to have potential. This has involved discounting certain constrained areas within sites e.g. land that contributes to the setting of listed buildings, is prone to flooding, trees etc. Further site visits have also taken place where necessary, to inform the iterative decision making process.

### *Housing*

- 5.13 National policy requires the Council to objectively identify and plan to meet the area's needs for housing. The draft LP proposes site allocations to meet housing needs based on a target of 670 dwellings per annum (C3 use), which equates to a need for 12,060 homes for the period 2016/17 – 2033/34. Once completions, commitments and windfalls of 9,136 are deducted, the Council needs to find 3,216 additional homes. This includes a 10% flexibility buffer. Policy LP2 of the draft LP gives a further breakdown of these figures.
- 5.14 The housing target of 670 dwellings per annum was published alongside the recent Government consultation document 'Planning the right homes in the right places'. It is based on the formula that is being suggested to standardise assessments of local housing need. The figure covers the period 2016 – 2026. The Council is using this figure beyond 2026 to 2034 for the purposes of the draft LP. This represents an increase over the locally derived housing need figure of 635 dwellings per annum

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<sup>4</sup> <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4653109>

<sup>5</sup> The results will be available in the 'Draft Local Plan I&O Summary of Responses and Consultation Statement (Reg 22(1)(c))'

contained in the Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>6</sup>.

- 5.15 The draft LP uses the indicative Government figure rather than the locally derived 635 SHMA figure in acknowledgement of the Government’s proposed transitional arrangements. These suggest that the new standardised method will need to be used where plans are submitted for examination after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, or after the revised Framework is published (whichever is the later). It is considered better to plan for a higher number of new homes and include additional sites now rather than at the publication stage i.e. just before the submission of the plan, in order to provide greater opportunity for rigorous and transparent consultation on proposed site allocations.
- 5.16 The draft LP is proposing to allocate 24 sites that are a mix of sizes (with an estimated capacity of 3,651 dwellings) to meet the outstanding requirement (see paragraph 5.13). These will complement those already allocated in the SALP. This allows for more than 10% flexibility, and acknowledges the fact that certain sites have technical constraints that need to be overcome to enable their development. This could impact on capacity. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the estimated capacities by previously developed land (PDL)/greenfield. A full list of the sites is included in the draft LP (Appendix A).
- 5.17 Nearly half of the estimated capacity of the proposed allocations in Bracknell is on previously developed land, mainly within Bracknell Town Centre (see Table 1). It is assumed that flats would be provided as part of mixed use schemes on a number of sites. In accordance with emerging national policy, the aim is to maximise densities in urban locations that are well served by public transport. This will have an impact on the skyline of Bracknell Town Centre in that there is likely to be a general increase in the heights of buildings. However regard has been paid to recent schemes that have been built/granted planning permission. The proposed capacities of sites in and around the Town Centre have taken into account other uses that need to be accommodated within the developable area, such as business and retail floorspace.

**Table 1: Parish overview, estimated capacity by Previously Developed Land (PDL) / Greenfield**

	<b>Previously Developed Land</b>	<b>Greenfield</b>	<b>Total</b>
Binfield	0	167	<b>167</b>
Bracknell	784	837	<b>1,621</b>
Crowthorne	0	0	<b>0</b>
Sandhurst	0	217	<b>217</b>
Warfield	0	364	<b>364</b>
Winkfield	6	1,276	<b>1,282</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>2,861</b>	<b>3,651</b>

- 5.18 Whilst no strategic allocations are proposed, there are several ‘clusters’ made up of adjacent individual sites. The development of these sites will be supported if they are developed comprehensively. This will ensure that appropriate infrastructure is put in place. Indicative concept plans have been produced for these areas and other highly constrained sites to illustrate where development and associated infrastructure could

<sup>6</sup> <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/3976882>

be accommodated, whilst taking into account constraints. Indicative concept plans have been produced for the following areas:

- Land at the Hideout and Beaufort Park (ref: CLUSTER 3; Policy LP4)
- Land at Winkfield Row (ref: CLUSTER 5; Policy LP6)
- Land at Hayley Green (ref: CLUSTER 7; Policy LP7) \*
- Land at South of London Road, east of Bog Lane and west of Swinley Road (Whitmoor Forest) (Crown Land) (ref: WINK22; Policy LP5)

\* N.B. this site is proposed for allocation through the emerging Warfield Neighbourhood Plan. However for consistency and to accommodate a primary school it has been necessary to produce an indicative concept plan.

- 5.19 The proposed site allocations for housing (together with indicative concept plans) are in the 'Strategic Issues' – 'Housing' section of the draft LP (Appendix A). The sites will also be shown on the draft Policies Map that will be produced for the public consultation; however maps of the proposed allocations, any necessary settlement boundary amendments or other changes to the existing policy designations are shown on inset maps in the draft LP (Appendix A). It is anticipated that a mix of site sizes will provide the Council with the best prospect of being able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and will enable delivery of housing and infrastructure in tandem.
- 5.20 It is anticipated that the proposed allocations will generate enough demand to require three new primary schools and one new secondary school. Provision is made for on-site primary schools in Policies LP5, LP6 and LP7. Although the proposed capacities take school provision into account, refinements to the exact location and requirements for the schools may further impact on estimated capacities.
- 5.21 The SHMA sets out the results of the objective assessment of need for bedspaces in nursing homes and care homes (these fall within Use Class C2 or the category of residential institutions) for Bracknell Forest. There is a need for a net increase of approximately 294 bedspaces of C2 provision (to 2036), primarily to help meet the accommodation needs of older people who need to live in an environment which provides residential or nursing care. At the 31st March 2017, 175 bedspaces were already under construction and there were outstanding permissions for a further 60 bedspaces and an unspecified number of bedspaces in a facility at the former Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne. In addition, the allocation of land through the SALP at Broadmoor Hospital, Lower Broadmoor Road, Crowthorne (Policy SA4) includes a care home. Therefore, at this stage, it is not considered necessary to make further allocations for C2 purposes.
- 5.22 The draft LP states that there is a need for five additional pitches<sup>7</sup> for Gypsies and Travellers during the Plan period based on evidence in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)<sup>8</sup>. Three of these pitches are required in the period 2016/17 - 2020/21, and the remaining two in the latter half of the Plan period. The GTAA did not find any need for additional Travelling Showpersons' plots. The GTAA recommended that a transit site was provided as part of a cross-boundary strategic solution.

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<sup>7</sup> This is the need based on those who meet the definition of Travellers set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).

<sup>8</sup> <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4751048>

- 5.23 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) states that local planning authorities should set pitch and plot targets which address the likely need for permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their areas. In producing a local plan, there is also a need to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets and a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for years 6 to 10 and, where possible 11 to 15.
- 5.24 At the time of preparing this version of the plan, the Council is still considering the results of the recent GTAA and strategy to be taken. Possible options include:
- safeguarding authorised sites
  - extending existing sites
  - engaging with adjoining Authorities regarding the need for transit accommodation.

#### *Employment*

- 5.25 Bracknell Forest lies within the Central Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). The Central Berkshire Employment Development Needs Assessment (EDNA)<sup>9</sup> concluded that an additional 85,410 sqm net of B1a/B1b floorspace and 263,110 sqm net of B1c/B2/B8 floorspace is needed in Bracknell Forest over the period 2013 - 2036. Whilst this figure does not exactly equate with the proposed Plan period, the Council will have unmet need.
- 5.26 The Council has conducted two call for sites. These resulted in the promotion of sites with an estimated potential capacity of 55,980 sqm of employment floorspace, with 18,100 sqm being promoted as an alternative to housing. The approach of the draft LP is therefore to protect existing designated employment areas. The Article 4 direction covering the Western, Southern and Eastern employment areas comes into force on 27 February 2018. This will remove the permitted development right to convert offices to residential dwellings in these areas. This is intended to help to protect the Borough's employment areas.
- 5.27 The Council has undertaken a review of existing employment area boundaries and is proposing some minor modifications for consistency, i.e. where redevelopment has taken place at the boundary periphery and is no longer in employment use. The draft LP also proposes to designate Wellington Business Park as an employment area in acknowledgement of the employment role it plays in the Borough, and to discourage small business units being lost to housing.
- 5.28 The Council is in the process of commissioning further work to assess the market demand for employment floorspace and the potential for intensification of existing employment areas to accommodate some of the unmet employment need. It is not expected that this will fully address the shortfall. However, it should be noted that in the wider FEMA, Reading Borough Council have published their draft Local Plan and they are intending to over-provide office floorspace. The implications for the wider FEMA will be considered as part of ongoing duty to cooperate discussions.
- 5.29 Changes are proposed to the extent of retail and frontage designations within retail areas. These changes reflect up to date guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in the case of Bracknell Town Centre, its regeneration and new layout. They include designating primary and secondary frontages for all retail

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<sup>9</sup> <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4252028>

centres (including local centres), and the proposal to designate the Meadows at Sandhurst as an out-of-centre location.

### *Green Belt*

- 5.30 The draft LP defines ‘village envelopes’ for the purposes of infilling around five villages in the Green Belt, which is consistent with the NPPF. These will replace the ‘Green Belt Villages’ currently identified in the BFBLP. Accordingly there are three current Green Belt Villages that will no longer have a defined village boundary because they are not considered to constitute villages for the purposes of infilling.
- 5.31 As indicated in paragraph 5.10, the SHELAA includes a number of sites in the Green Belt. National policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be amended in exceptional circumstances (NPPF paragraph 83) and highlights the need to promote sustainable patterns of development when reviewing boundaries (NPPF paragraph 82 and 84). Furthermore, the results of the Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Joint Green Belt Review<sup>10</sup> show that all parcels of land in Bracknell Forest, make at least an overall contribution to the ‘purposes’ of the Green Belt.
- 5.32 Several of the Green Belt sites promoted to the Council are located near existing ‘Green Belt Villages’, which have been reviewed (see paragraph 5.30 above). It is not considered sustainable to remove small areas of land from the Green Belt to accommodate development, particularly as the evidence base concludes that existing Green Belt land contributes to the purposes of the designation and should remain in the Green Belt<sup>11</sup>. Promoted sites that are located adjacent to excluded settlements (i.e. areas inset into the Green Belt and not ‘washed over’ by the designation), either had other constraints to development or were too small to warrant a Green Belt review for their release.
- 5.33 The only large site to be promoted in the Green Belt involves the option of development at Syngenta; a large, partially PDL site located in the northern part of the Borough. The promoters are suggesting a development involving the delivery of new employment space, up to 95,000 sqm (net increase of 70,000 sqm), 3,000 new homes and complementary infrastructure including, primary school provision, and SANG. It is to be delivered over a 20 year period (from a notional start date of 2022 up to 2043 i.e. beyond the proposed plan period).
- 5.34 The scale and nature of the suggested development is not considered to be sufficiently sustainable to meet the requirements of paragraph 84 of the NPPF, or to meet the test of exceptional circumstances set out in paragraph 83 of the NPPF. These must be met to justify the land being removed from the Green Belt. Furthermore, other sites are being promoted in the countryside (not subject to Green Belt designation) and are not being proposed for allocation. On a comparative basis, these are in more sustainable locations. However, the draft LP recognises the national importance of the existing employment site and includes a policy to positively support the delivery of additional and improved employment space at Syngenta within the context of national Green Belt policy.

### *Development management policies*

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<sup>10</sup> Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Joint Green Belt Review Summary (June 2016) <https://beta.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/comprehensive-local-plan/evidence-base>

<sup>11</sup> Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough Joint Green Belt Review: Main Report <http://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4096698>

- 5.35 There are a total of 51 policies in the LP; many are non-strategic development management policies. These cover a broad range of matters including:
- Development in the Green Belt or Countryside (includes Green Belt, countryside, landscape character and strategic gaps, rural workers dwellings and equestrian uses)
  - Character and Design (includes overarching design policy and internal space standards for dwellings)
  - Housing (includes protection of existing housing stock, affordable housing, housing mix, and criteria for traveller sites)
  - Local Retail and Community Uses (includes change of use within retail areas, and protection of community facilities)
  - Heritage and Conservation
  - Natural Environment (includes nature conservation and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area)
  - Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (includes pollution and hazards, land potentially affected by contamination, flooding, drainage, and renewable energy)
  - Transport
  - Local Infrastructure and Facilities

#### Sustainability Appraisal

- 5.36 The 'Draft Sustainability Appraisal (Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) of Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan' (SA<sup>12</sup>) accompanies the draft LP; it incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA<sup>13</sup>). It examines each of the proposals in the draft LP to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions; as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have. In doing so, it helps make sure that the proposals in the Plan are the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives. The appraisal has been carried out against the agreed SA Objectives, established within the SA/SEA Scoping Report, November 2015<sup>14</sup>.
- 5.37 The SA process has been carried out by in-house by the Council to ensure it is iterative and influential throughout the development of the plan. It has followed the process set out in the Site Selection Methodology. It also tests the evidence underpinning the plan and contributes to demonstrating how the tests of soundness have been met. The SA has informed the development of all aspects of the draft LP.
- 5.38 The SA will continue to develop and inform the LP up until the plan is submitted for examination. The SA is attached at Appendix D.

#### Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 5.39 The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is to identify any aspects of the emerging Local Plan that have the potential to cause a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 or European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to identify appropriate avoidance and mitigation

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<sup>12</sup> SA is required by the Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SA is being conducted in line with the Planning Practice Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

<sup>13</sup> SEA is required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/comprehensive-local-plan/evidence-base>

strategies where such effects are identified. If there is a probability or a risk that there will be significant effects (having regard to the site's conservation objectives) then the plan or project must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications on the site (Regulation 61(1)).

- 5.40 There is a legal requirement for all Local Plans to be subject to a HRA. The need for HRA is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 5.41 The draft HRA is attached at Appendix E.

#### Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 5.42 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will accompany the draft LP and specify, in as much detail as possible (based on available information) the physical, social and green infrastructure needed to enable the planned growth up to 2034. An initial draft of the IDP is attached at Appendix F and includes a delivery schedule that sets out what the infrastructure requirements are for large sites and who will provide the infrastructure. Confirmation of when infrastructure is likely to be delivered, will be sought following the period of public consultation when all internal and external infrastructure providers will have had time to review each site in detail and gauge specific requirements.
- 5.43 In addition to the larger proposed allocations, the IDP covers the infrastructure requirements for the smaller sites in a general schedule. This will be set out by area and will predominantly use the approach set out in the Planning Obligations SPD<sup>15</sup>. The IDP will assess the cumulative impact of the small sites on existing infrastructure provision within settlements. This work will be completed after the public consultation, when all internal and external infrastructure providers have had time to review the sites and cumulative impacts in detail and gauge wider infrastructure requirements.
- 5.44 The IDP will continue to develop, be refined and added to up until the plan is submitted for examination. It will also be used to inform site policies, and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulation 123 list.

#### Proposed Consultation Strategy

- 5.45 The Council is required by Regulations to undertake consultation with certain groups and organisations as part of the preparation of a Local Plan. The Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement<sup>16</sup> also sets out that the Council will prepare a consultation strategy for each stage of a Local Plan. Taking these into account, a Consultation Strategy including a Consultation Mandate has been prepared for this stage of the LP and is attached as Appendix B.
- 5.46 It is proposed to carry out the public consultation for just over a six week period prior to the Easter holidays. It is proposed the consultation will start on Thursday 8th February and end on Monday 26th March 2018.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents-spds/planning-obligations-supplementary-planning-documents>

<sup>16</sup> [https://files.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/bracknell/documents/statement-of-community-involvement-2014.pdf?KDumQuiimCYmBU7Q0bpr\\_.DLCVdJGI0](https://files.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/bracknell/documents/statement-of-community-involvement-2014.pdf?KDumQuiimCYmBU7Q0bpr_.DLCVdJGI0)

5.47 The consultation will involve the following:

- Notification to all those on the existing Planning Policy database;
- Making documents, including a summary leaflet, available on:
  - i) the Council's website and consultation portal, and,
  - ii) at the Time Square offices;
- Making the draft LP document and leaflet available at local libraries (where internet access is also available);
- Sending a hard copy of the draft LP and leaflet to Town and Parish Councils and holding a Town and Parish Clerks' briefing;
- Distributing information by way of, a press release, alerts on social media, Town and Country and a press advert in local newspapers;
- Using infographics to publicise frequently asked questions via social media;
- Manned exhibitions focussed on Binfield, West Bracknell, Warfield and Winkfield as the areas most affected by greenfield housing allocations. Times and venues to be included in publicity. Exhibitions to be held in evenings and Saturday mornings as well as during the working day to make them more accessible;
- Sending out consultation information via 'Involve' (which is a central support agency for local voluntary and community action groups within the Borough). This also includes the Council's Access Group;
- Consulting those with business interests. The Council will send out consultation information via the Council's Regeneration and Economy Team.

5.48 This consultation follows on from the Issues and Options consultation held in Summer 2016, bespoke consultations held on evidence base studies<sup>17</sup>, and draft policies having been through internal, and where required, external consultation with key consultees. Policies have also been considered by the Local Plan Working Group (non-decision making body; exempt information). The comments received through these consultations have informed the production of the draft LP.

5.49 It should be noted that sites proposed for allocation have already been consulted on for factual correctness through the SHELAA. Since then, further site specific evidence has become available and a comparative assessment has been undertaken. This consultation will be an opportunity for stakeholders to provide comments on sites as proposed allocations. It is recommended that when available, the accompanying SA is read to understand the reasons for the proposed site allocations and why other sites have been omitted. The SA will also be subject to consultation.

#### Duty to Cooperate

5.50 The duty to cooperate is a legal test that requires cooperation between local planning authorities and other public bodies to maximise the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans. It is separate from but related to the Local Plan test of soundness<sup>18</sup>.

5.51 The Council has already undertaken duty to cooperate on the emerging draft LP, through:

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<sup>17</sup> Information can be found in the individual evidence base documents: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/comprehensive-local-plan/evidence-base>

<sup>18</sup> Duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011, and amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- a start date letter (regulation 18) that was issued and consulted upon. This notified stakeholders of the Council's intention to prepare a Plan and invited comments on what the Plan should contain;
- bespoke consultations on the Bracknell Forest evidence base;
- Duty to Cooperate Framework which was consulted on in February 2016; and
- the Issues and Options consultation which invited responses to a range of questions that informed subsequent preparation of the draft Local Plan.

Further detail on these elements is set out in the Duty to Cooperate Authority Monitoring Report<sup>19</sup>.

- 5.52 In addition to the above (paragraph 5.51), the results of the SHMA led to joint working with Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire Local Authorities on the West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework<sup>20</sup>. It was agreed by each Council and demonstrates the strategic priorities and projects that the authorities will work on collaboratively. It does not allocate land for any purpose (this will be done through the individual Local Plans). It does however, demonstrate that the Councils will work collectively to try and meet the Housing Market Area's (HMA's) needs. The Framework is also endorsed by Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 5.53 Neighbouring local authorities and other statutory consultees will be targeted as part of the draft LP consultation. Where there are key outstanding strategic issues that require further consideration bespoke meetings or discussions will be arranged with relevant statutory stakeholders.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Consultation on the Local Plan is required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The provisions relating to the consultation are covered by Regulation 18 and it is considered that undertaking the consultation as proposed will help fulfil the Council's obligations under this legislation.

### Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The costs of developing the Local Plan, including the consultation and any staffing requirements, will be met through existing Planning Policy budgets.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An Equalities Impact Screening Record Form is attached as Appendix C.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 The Strategic Risk Register (2015) includes Risk 10 which identifies the risk of not working effectively with key partners or residents in the development of services. Such a risk could mean that community needs are not met and a negative impact on community cohesion. The production of an up-to-date LP will involve extensive

<sup>19</sup> [https://files.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/bracknell/documents/amr-duty-to-cooperate.pdf?Up9oVrnZgLvT89.zAtfE\\_.GnuimIW.eH](https://files.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/bracknell/documents/amr-duty-to-cooperate.pdf?Up9oVrnZgLvT89.zAtfE_.GnuimIW.eH)

<sup>20</sup> <https://files.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/bracknell/west-of-berkshire-spatial-planning-framework-final.pdf>

engagement with stakeholders and residents in order to identify local needs. Risk 11 identifies the risk of being unable to implement legislative changes. The production of the Local Plan allows recent legislative changes to be reflected within the Local Plan.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The preparation of the draft LP has involved commissioning evidence base studies, several of which have been subject to consultation prior to finalisation. It has also been informed by the results of duty to cooperate responses and the Issues and Options consultation. The draft policies have been through internal and if required external consultation with key consultees, and considered by the Local Plan Working Group (exempt information). No other groups have been consulted on the preparation of this report. However, the report seeks agreement to a consultation strategy (see Appendix B) to carry out engagement on the draft LP. Details of the proposed draft LP consultation are set out at Section 5 above (paragraphs 5.45 – 5.49) and in Appendix B.

### Appendices

- Appendix A Draft Local Plan
- Appendix B Consultation Strategy and Consultation Mandate
- Appendix C Equalities Impact Screening Form
- Appendix D Draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) of Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan
- Appendix E Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan
- Appendix F Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

### Background Papers

Council Plan 2015 – 2019

Statement of Community Involvement (February 2014)

Local Development Scheme 2016 – 2019 (June 2016)

Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016)

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Part 2: Results (August 2017)

Central Berkshire Employment and Development Needs Assessment (October 2016)

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (October 2017)

### Contact for further information

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