



Bracknell Forest Local Plan  
(Pre-Submission/Regulation 19 Publication)

Duty to Co-operate Statement

Version for Executive/Council  
March 2021

This background paper supports the Bracknell Forest Local Plan, and provides background information relating to the duty to co-operate.

This document is not on deposit for consultation and is background evidence.

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to set out how Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) has met the requirements of the duty to co-operate in relation to the preparation of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP), and has been written to aid the Planning Inspector's examination of the BFLP.
- 1.2 This Paper forms part of a suite of documents, produced to support the examination of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The Paper is structured as follows:
- Section 2: sets out the strategic context for Bracknell Forest.
  - Section 3: provides an overview of the duty to co-operate (including relevant consultation bodies and cross boundary matters).
  - Section 4: provides an overview of collaboration alongside the BFLP process.
  - Section 5: the Local Plan in terms of what it covers, consultation which has taken place, and includes a table which sets out collaboration which has taken place on the Local Plan evidence base.
  - Section 6: sets out relevant issues and associated consultation bodies, and how any issues have been addressed.
- 1.4 At the time of writing this Paper, as some matters were still awaiting final conclusion, this is an interim report to support the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Plan. A Submission version of this Paper will be produced at the time the Plan is submitted for Examination.

## **2. Strategic Context**

- 2.1 Bracknell Forest is a unitary Authority located within Berkshire, alongside five other unitary authorities (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Wokingham, Reading, West Berkshire, and Slough). It falls within a Western Berkshire housing market area (along with Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire), and a Central Berkshire functional economic market area (along with Wokingham, Reading and parts of RBWM). The Borough contains part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), which spans ten other authorities within Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. This is an international designation relating to a network of heathland sites that provides a habitat for important ground-nesting bird species. Natural England has advised that new housing within 5km of the SPA may harm the rare bird populations. Consequently mitigation of proposals is required. The northern and eastern parts of the borough also contain the outer boundary of the London Metropolitan Green Belt.

### **3. What is the Duty to Co-operate?**

- 3.1 The duty to co-operate is both a 'legal' and 'soundness' test. The requirements relating to the duty to co-operate were first introduced in the Localism Act in 2011, and place a legal duty to local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively on an on-going basis in the preparation of plans, in relation to strategic matters which cross administrative boundaries.
- 3.2 The legal test is initially examined by the appointed planning inspector when the Plan is submitted. It cannot be fulfilled once the Examination stage is reached. As a result of this, and the need to meet the soundness test, local planning authorities (LPAs) need to provide robust evidence of the efforts they have made to co-operate on strategic cross boundary matters. This evidence will need to identify who the authority has co-operated with, the nature and timing of co-operation, and how it has influenced the preparation and content of the Local Plan.

#### **3.1 BFC Duty to Co-operate Framework**

- 3.1.1 At the start of the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council prepared a Duty to Co-operate Framework<sup>1</sup>, to identify the strategic matters that would be considered through the Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan and relevant duty to co-operate bodies that would have an interest in those issues. This document was subject to public consultation between October-December 2015, and was published in February 2016. This includes a table of the relevant bodies and which matters they wished to be involved with. It should be noted that it was prepared under an older version of the NPPF (2012), although the provisions relating to duty to co-operate remain unchanged.

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<sup>1</sup>Duty to Co-operate Framework (February 2016): <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local-plan-duty-to-cooperate.pdf>

## 3.2 Duty to co-operate bodies

3.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012, as amended) sets out those bodies that are prescribed for the purposes of Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004:

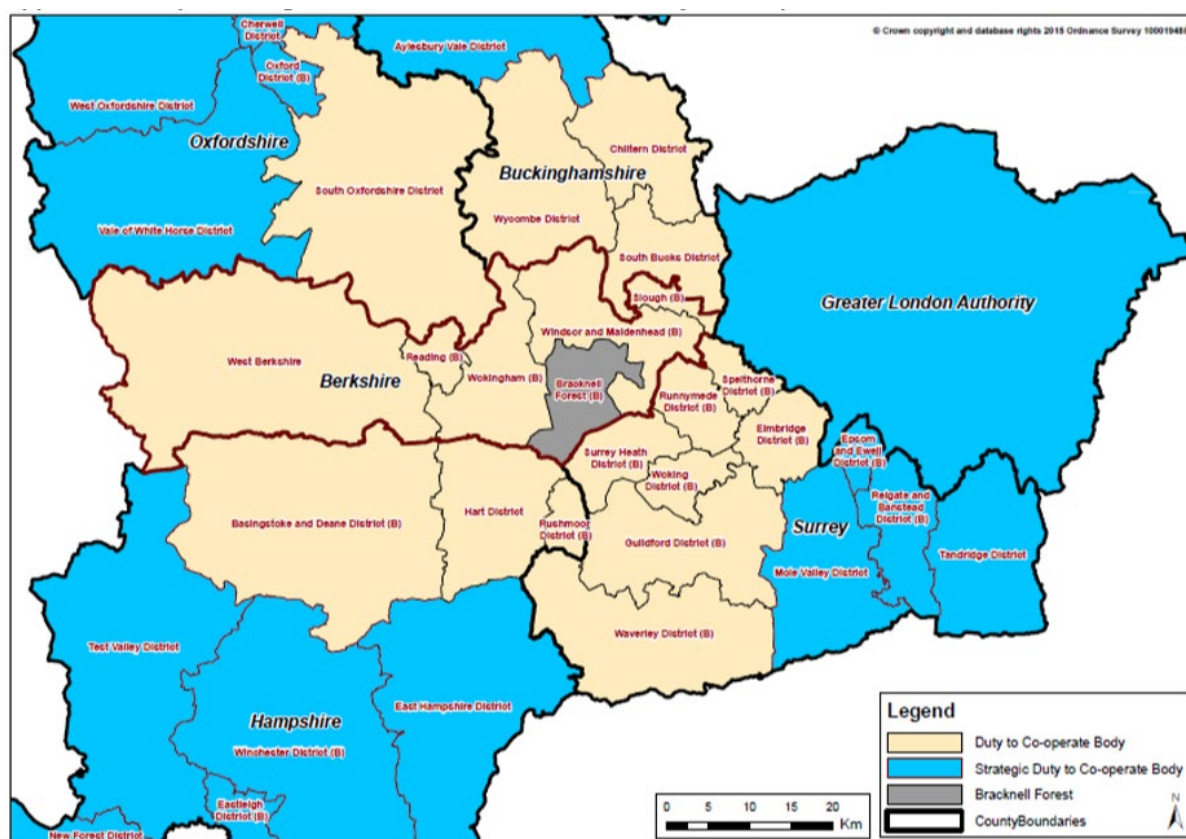
- Environment Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England)
- Natural England
- Mayor of London
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Each clinical commissioning group established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006
- National Health Service Commissioning Board
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Transport for London
- Each Integrated Transport Authority (not relevant for Bracknell Forest)
- Each Highways Authority
- Highways England
- Marine Management Organisation (not relevant for Bracknell Forest)

3.2.2 It also includes Local Enterprise and Local Nature Partnerships (LEPs and LNPs). For BFC, this comprises the following:

- Thames Valley Berkshire LEP (LEP which covers Bracknell Forest)
- Enterprise M3 LEP (adjoining LEP)
- Berkshire LNP

3.2.3 The NPPF (para. 24) also sets out a soundness test criterion that public bodies have a duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. Therefore, co-operation will also be required with local authorities surrounding Bracknell Forest which will include district and county councils. A map showing the local authorities surrounding Bracknell Forest is contained in **Figure 1**, below.

**Figure 1: Local Authorities identified as duty to co-operate bodies**



Strategic Duty to Co-operate Bodies are those not specifically identified but are within an area covered by a strategic planning body

### 3.3 Strategic cross boundary matters

3.3.1 Following consultation on the Duty to Co-operate Framework, and having regard to national policy (NPPF, para. 20), cross boundary strategic priorities have been determined as including the following:

- Homes needed in the area (including affordable, Traveller needs, and housing for older people)
- Jobs needed in the area
- Provision of retail, leisure, and other commercial development
- Provision of infrastructure (including transport)
- Provision of community facilities (including health provision)
- Natural Environment (including climate change, mitigation and conservation of the natural environment, and Green Belt)



#### **4. Collaboration alongside the BFLP Process**

- 4.1 Engagement takes place in a variety of ways in addition to the Local Plan process as set out below.

##### Within Berkshire on policy matters

- 4.2 There is on-going dialogue and joint working within Berkshire. The six Berkshire unitary authorities meet regularly to discuss policy matters, at both Policy Team Leader and Head of Planning levels. Whilst not formal duty to co-operate meetings, common issues are discussed and solutions agreed through these forums. This has resulted in joint evidence base work (such as on housing and economy). In 2016, a 'West of Berkshire Spatial Framework'<sup>2</sup> was agreed between Bracknell Forest, Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough Councils, together with the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP. It is intended that a Statement of Common Ground will be progressed between the four authorities. It is hoped that this will be finalised prior to Submission, so will be referred to in an updated duty to co-operate statement.

##### Transport

- 4.3 The Council has been involved in dialogue with other Berkshire Unitary Authorities on transport matters, including via the Development Plans Group, Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum and the Berkshire Thames Valley Local Economic Partnership.

##### Natural Environment

- 4.4 There are well established cross-boundary mechanisms in place in relation to the SPA:
- Joint Strategic Partnership Board and associated officer groups.
  - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Capacity Agreement with Surrey Heath Council to enable housebuilding within its administrative area, but using available SANG capacity in Bracknell Forest SANGs.
  - Continued and extensive working relationships between the Council and natural England on SPA projects.
  - Day to day running of the SAMM Project in accordance with a legal agreement with Natural England and 10 other local authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths issues - Waverley, Guildford, Surrey Heath, Woking, Hart, Wokingham, Elmbridge, Runnymede, RBWM, and Rushmoor Councils.
  - Sharing good practise regarding SANG and SPA issues including their monitoring SANGs and the SPA mitigation project.
- 4.5 In relation to biodiversity:
- A BFC officer sits on the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership, and Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.
  - There is also a newly established group (overseen by Rushmoor) relating to the Blackwater Valley Nature Enhancement Project, to look at joint access management and SANG/BNG issues within the Blackwater Valley. It is attended by Rushmoor, Wokingham, Hart, Surrey Heath, Guildford, Waverley, Hampshire County Council, RSPB, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

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<sup>2</sup> West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework (2016): <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/west-of-berkshire-spatial-planning-framework-final.pdf>

## **5. The Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP)**

### **5.1 Scope of the Plan**

- 5.1.1 The BFLP will set the long term spatial vision and development strategy for the borough up to 2037. It includes site allocations together with development management policies. It also contains a strategic allocation in the Green Belt (comprising 2,000 homes and employment uses) which will extend beyond the plan period. Once adopted, the Plan will replace the saved policies in the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002) and the Core Strategy (2008).

### **5.2 Overview of duty to co-operate engagement on the Plan**

- 5.2.1 Engagement on the plan has related to consultation on the plan and associated evidence, collaboration on evidence base, and discussion/meetings on specific sites (such as land at Jealott's Hill), which is set out in the sections below.

### **5.3 Consultation stages relating to the preparation of the Local Plan**

- 5.3.1 A 'Pre-Submission Consultation Statement'<sup>3</sup> (as required by Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations) sets out how the Council undertook community participation and stakeholder engagement. At each stage, consultation included the duty to co-operate bodies. The various stages of consultation are summarised in **Table 1**, below:

**Table 1 - overview of key engagement stages on the Local Plan**

<b>Consultation Stage</b>	<b>Consultation dates</b>
SA/SEA Scoping Report	25 June – 31 July 2015
Duty to Co-operate Framework	21 October - 2 December 2015
Scope of the Local Plan	21 October - 2 December 2015
Issues and Options	13 June - 25 July 2016
Draft Local Plan	8 February - 26 March 2018
New Sites consultation	3 September - 24 September 2018
Revised Growth Strategy	25 October - 5 December 2019

### **5.4 Duty to co-operate meetings**

- 5.4.1 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, prior to consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy a specific meeting was held with neighbouring authorities from within Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey.
- 5.4.2 At the time of writing this Paper, a similar meeting has been scheduled in respect of the Pre-Submission Plan.

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<sup>3</sup> Pre-Submission Consultation Statement. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/10r)

## 5.5 Collaboration on Evidence Base

5.5.1 **Table 2** sets out collaboration on BFC's evidence base by topic area relating to the strategic priorities outlined in **Section 3.3**. This includes some work under the 2012 NPPF requirements (for example Strategic Housing Market Assessment), which are no longer a requirement under the 2019 NPPF, but provide context in terms of work and collaboration which has taken place during the preparation of the Local Plan.

5.5.2 The Council's evidence base<sup>4</sup>, and information relating to consultations<sup>5</sup> on the Local Plan are available to view via the Council's website. The various supporting evidence documents (depending on publication date) have been available to view on the Council's web site, and also for comment as part of the Local Plan consultation stages (a specific question referring to the evidence base/supporting documents was included on the consultation forms<sup>6</sup>).

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<sup>4</sup> Local Plan evidence base: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/development-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan/evidence-base>

<sup>5</sup> Local Plan consultations: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/development-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan>

<sup>6</sup> Local Plan consultation forms:

- Draft Local Plan (2018): <https://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4867318> (see second to last page)
- Revised Growth Strategy (2019): <https://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/5511127> (see page 6)

**Table 2 - Overview of collaboration on Local Plan evidence base**

Evidence	Collaboration
Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment/ (SA/SEA)	<p>Specific consultation was undertaken on the SA/SEA Scoping report in November 2015. In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Regulation 12(6)), this included consulting specific statutory bodies (which are also duty to co-operate bodies: Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency).</p> <p>The SA/SEA has been an iterative process. Draft documents have been prepared to support the various stages of the BFLP. They have been available to view on the Council's website, and have been available for comment as part of the public consultation on the Local Plan.</p> <p>See documents published on the Council's website as part of the suite of documents referenced 'LP/Ev/1'.</p>
<b>Homes needed in the area</b>	
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)	<p>Consultation on the draft SHELAA methodology took place between 11 January and 8 February 2016. This including consulting with agents/landowners of previously submitted sites, and everyone on the Policy consultation database (which includes statutory consultees and duty to co-operate bodies). Responses were received from some consultees such as RBWM, Sport England, Environment Agency, Historic England), which informed the final methodology. For further information see the SHELAA Consultation Statement, November 2016<sup>7</sup>.</p> <p>Further consultation on the final draft methodology took place between 21 November and 19 December 2016, and was finalised in August 2017. For further information see paragraph 3.8 of the final methodology document (document ref: CLP/Ev/10d).</p>

<sup>7</sup> SHELAA Consultation Statement (2016): <https://consult.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/file/4258492>

Evidence	Collaboration
Site Selection Methodology	Consultation on a draft Site Selection methodology took place between 21 November and 19 December 2016, and was finalised in June 2017 (see document ref: CLP/Ev/10c).
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	<p>The Council together with other Berkshire Unitary Authorities (Reading Borough Council, RBWM, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council), and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, commissioned consultants GL Hearn to carry out a two part study looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing the relevant housing market areas within Berkshire</li> <li>• Establishing the relevant objective assessment of housing need within Berkshire</li> </ul> <p>The SHMA identified two housing market areas (HMAs). A western Berkshire HMA comprising Bracknell Forest, Wokingham Borough, Reading Borough and West Berkshire Councils, and an eastern Berkshire HMA comprising Slough Borough Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, together with South Bucks District Council. The study was completed in February 2016.</p> <p>As part of the study, a stakeholder event was held on 19 May 2015, in relation to the geography of the housing markets, and to present emerging findings. Two sessions took place, one with duty-to-cooperate partners, and the other with wider stakeholders (including local agents, housebuilders/agents, registered providers and other interest groups). For further information see paras. 2.231-2.235 and Appendix D of the study (document ref CLP/Ev/2c).</p> <p>The Council also responded to consultation requests from other authorities when their SHMAs were being prepared.</p>
Western Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework	<p>The Western HMA authorities have continued to work together throughout the process, resulting in a Western Berkshire Housing Market Area Strategic Planning Framework being published in December 2016. This identifies the strategic opportunities which exist in the market area, which could help to meet housing and other needs over the next 20 years.</p> <p>The Study outlines a number of areas of search agreed between the local authorities (document ref: CLP/Ev/2d).</p>

Evidence	Collaboration
Gypsy and Travellers	<p>Joint work was undertaken on producing a Berkshire methodology, though subsequent individual Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) were commissioned. Most of Berkshire chose to appoint arc4 to produce their GTAAAs, so there is a consistent approach across the area. Hart and Surrey Heath which adjoin BFC are in Hampshire and Surrey respectively and used different consultants.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest appointed arc 4 to undertake the study in January 2017, which was completed in 2017. Surrounding authorities and other key stakeholders were consulted on the GTAA during its preparation as part of ongoing duty to co-operate (see Appendix C of GTAA). (Document ref: CLP/Ev/2b).</p> <p>The Council also responded to consultation requests from other authorities when their GTAAAs were being prepared.</p>
<b>Jobs needed in the area</b>	
Economy – Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA)	<p>Consultants NLP were appointed to identify and define the relevant Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs) for authorities located within Berkshire (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Slough, Reading, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Councils). The commissioning authorities have continued to work together throughout the process. Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership were also involved throughout the study. The FEMA identified three economic market areas, with Bracknell Forest located within the Central Berkshire FEMA, along with Reading Borough, Wokingham Borough and parts of RBWM. The study was completed in February 2016.</p> <p>As part of the study, a focused consultation on the proposed methodology took place in October 2015, with further consultation on the emerging findings in December 2015. This included engagement with neighbouring authorities including Parish/Town Councils). See paragraphs 1.18-1.20 and Appendixes 1-4 of the Study for further information (document ref: CLP/Ev/3a).</p> <p>The Council also responded to consultation requests from other authorities when their FEMAs were being prepared.</p>

Evidence	Collaboration
Economic Development Needs	<p>A study was commissioned by the Central Berkshire FEMA authorities and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership relating to an 'Economic Development Needs Assessment' (EDNA), which was completed by NLP in October 2016. This provides information about the future quantity of land or floorspace required for economic development uses (business, industrial, warehousing and storage uses). As part of the study, a focused consultation was undertaken on the draft report in July 2016. See paragraphs 1.13-1.16 and Appendices (document ref CLP/Ev/3b).</p> <p>The Council also responded to consultation requests from other authorities when their EDNAs were being prepared.</p> <p>Stantec and Aspinall Verdi were subsequently appointed in 2019 to undertake a specific Employment Land Needs Study (ELNS) for the Borough, which was completed in April 2020. This was as a result of the RBWM (who are part of the Central Berkshire FEMA) Local Plan Stage 1 examination hearing sessions in June 2018, where concern was expressed regarding the method and outputs of the EDNA. An update of the needs assessment also enabled the evidence base to be compliant with the 2019 NPPF.</p> <p>Whilst the ELNS report is specific to Bracknell Forest, the work was jointly commissioned by Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils (the output was that each authority had their own report). In producing the study, a technical briefing was held for duty to co-operate bodies which was attended by a number of district councils from the surrounding area and a presentation was made available to those who couldn't attend (which also included the Thames Valley Enterprise Partnership). (Document ref. LP/Ev/3e).</p>
<b>Provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development</b>	
Retail and Leisure	<p>GVA was appointed in 2016 to undertake a retail and commercial leisure study. It focuses on the main town centre uses, excluding offices, and will determine the quantitative and qualitative needs for retail and town centre uses over the plan period. The study was undertaken jointly by Bracknell Forest, Reading Borough, Wokingham Borough and West Berkshire Councils. (This included some focused consultation with retailers and property agents on need figures). The study was completed in April 2017 (document CLP/Ev/3c).</p>

Evidence	Collaboration
<b>Provision of infrastructure (including transport)</b>	
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	<p>The IDP is an iterative document, and versions have been made available for comment as part of the BFLP consultation stages, as well as being available to view on the Council's evidence webpage.</p> <p>A variety of specific organisations have been engaged throughout the preparation of the IDP. This includes various service and utility providers (both internal within the Council and external organisations). In relation to specific duty to co-operate bodies, this has included Highways England, rail providers (network rail, Great Western and South western Railway), health providers (including Bracknell and Ascot CCG).</p> <p>Engagement has involved email correspondence in relation to general infrastructure provision, requirements, and relating to specific sites (such as land at Jealott's Hill).</p>
Transport	<p>The Council has shared modelling data with other authorities, and responded to relevant consultations on planning documents.</p> <p>Assessing transport impact has followed industry standards in terms of approach taken:</p> <p>To evaluate the impact of development sites, and any mitigation measures aimed at addressing areas of highway delay, overall journey times were examined on a number of key strategic routes across the Borough. This process allows the identification of key pressure points following development and indicates the most appropriate measures.</p> <p>Journey times have been assessed during morning and evening peak hours along a total of six routes (both directions, so twelve in total) across the Borough, taking account of any delays that occur either at or between junctions.</p> <p>This is an iterative process in which improvement measures can be adjusted to achieve an overall improvement in journey time.</p>



Evidence	Collaboration
	<p>In addition to the above assessment process, there will be a suite of documents available summarising the development of the new 2037 Transport model. These will include the validation and forecasting reports as well as model specification and data collection reports. These demonstrate how the model has been developed to current WebTag standards to provide detailed outputs within the borough and a robust indication of the strategic impact across borough boundaries. Modelling analysis and outputs are available through the Transport Strategy Team.</p> <p>Supporting transport related papers which have been available for comments as part of the public consultations on the BFLP to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to Transport Modelling (document ref: CLP/Ev/4d)</li> <li>• Draft Transport Accessibility Assessment of Potential Sites (document ref: LP/Ev/4f)</li> <li>• Journey Times Assessment (document ref: LP/Ev/4j)</li> </ul> <p>Once produced, other supporting documents will be available to view on the Council's evidence page (also see <b>Section 6.4</b>).</p>
Open Space	<p>An Open Space Study was completed by the Council in 2017. It assesses the supply and demand of active and passive open space of public value within the Borough.</p> <p>As part of the needs assessment, consultation took place with Parish and Town Councils, Sport England, and National Governing Bodies for sports and Local Clubs. An allotment survey was also undertaken (see section 1.12). (Document ref: CLP/Ev/4a).</p>
<b>Natural Environment (including climate change, mitigation and conservation of the natural environment, and Green Belt)</b>	
Green Belt	<p>Amec was appointed in January 2016 to undertake a Green Belt Review, involving an assessment of the Green Belt against the five purposes as set out in the NPPF. This was undertaken jointly with Wokingham Borough Council. It was completed in June 2016.</p>

Evidence	Collaboration
	<p>As part of the preparation of the Review, focused consultation was undertaken on the methodology between 1 February and 15 February 2016. This included adjoining authorities (Windsor and Maidenhead, Reading, West Berks, Slough, Surrey County Council, Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Hampshire County Council, Hart, Basingstoke, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire County Council, Wycombe and South Bucks), together with the Town and Parish Councils within Wokingham and Bracknell Forest). For further information, and how consultation responses were addressed, see section 2.6 of the study (document ref: CLP/Ev/5c).</p>
Landscape	<p>LUC was appointed in 2014 to undertake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Landscape Character Assessment of the Borough (excluding land within settlements) (document ref: CLP/Ev/5a);</li> <li>• A 'recommendations report', setting out recommendations on landscape designation policies, 'gaps', and Green Belt village boundaries (from a landscape character perspective) (document ref: CLP/Ev/5b).</li> </ul> <p>Both studies were completed in September 2015.</p> <p>As part of the preparation of the work, a focused stakeholder workshop was held on 16 April 2015 to discuss the draft classification. Representatives from adjoining authorities and some duty to co-operate bodies were invited to attend (Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath, Hampshire County Council, Hart, RBWM, Wokingham, Natural England, Heritage England (formerly English Heritage), Environment Agency and Berkshire Archaeology). For further information see Appendix 4 of the Landscape Character Assessment.</p>
Flooding	<p>JBA Consulting was appointed in December 2016 to undertake a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The main study was completed in July 2018. Some addenda have been subsequently completed in relation to additional sites, which follow the methodology set out in the main Report.</p> <p>Throughout, the Environment Agency was involved in the preparation of the report (inception meeting, methodology statement, review of draft report).</p>

Evidence	Collaboration
	<p>A focused consultation on a Methodology Statement also took place between 8 February and 21 February 2017, where adjoining authorities and other duty to co-operate bodies were invited to comment (Hampshire County Council, Hart, Rushmoor, Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath, Waverley, Runnymede, Guildford, RBWM, Wokingham, Berkshire Local Nature Partnership, Environment Agency, and Natural England). For further information see Section 1.3 of the Report (document ref: LP/Ev/9d).</p>
Habitat Sites	<p>A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) supports the production of the Local Plan. This assesses/identifies any aspects of the Plan which have the potential to cause a likely significant effect on habitats sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to begin to identify an appropriate avoidance and mitigation strategy where such effects are identified.</p> <p>The HRA has been an iterative process. Draft documents have been prepared to support the various stages of the BFLP. They have been available to view on the Council's website, and have been available for comment as part of the public consultation stages.</p> <p>Natural England has also been engaged in the process, and has been invited to comment on draft documents prior to their publication.</p> <p>See documents published on the Council's website as part of the suite of documents referenced 'LP/EV/10'.</p>
Air Quality	<p>In 2018 the Council commissioned WSP to undertake an air quality assessment of the in combination effects of air pollution on habitat sites and human health within the Borough. At the time of writing this Paper, the Air Quality report had not been concluded.</p> <p>As part of the study, there has been extensive engagement with Natural England and neighbouring authorities (which has involved request for traffic data to feed into the assessment, and increasing awareness of the work being undertaken). This involved a specific meeting relating to the scope the</p>

Evidence	Collaboration
	work in 2018, and follow on discussions (meetings/emails during 2019 and 2020). Further details will be set out in a duty to co-operation section within the final air quality report.

## 5.6 Collaboration on site specific allocations: Jealott's Hill

- 5.6.1 A number of concerns were raised through the revised Growth Strategy consultation relating to land at Jealott's Hill from duty to co-operate bodies, particularly relating to cross-boundary impacts such as transport.
- 5.6.2 In addition to a meeting with surrounding local authorities prior to the start of the Revised Growth Strategy and Pre-Submission consultations, the Council has held specific meetings relating to land at Jealott's Hill (which has also included sharing of both the Councils evidence and relevant evidence produced by the promoters of Jealott's Hill, for example economic justification and assessments):
- April 2020 – meeting with Wokingham and RBWM: to discuss the proposed allocation and additional work being undertaken.
  - July 2020 – written correspondence with RBWM and Wokingham to share draft evidence and invite comments.
  - September 2020 - meeting to discuss meeting housing need, proposed allocation and cross boundary issues such as transport (involved neighbouring authorities within Berkshire (Reading, RBWM, Slough, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough), Surrey (Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath, Runnymede), Hampshire (Hampshire County Council, Hart and Rushmoor), South Bucks and Hertfordshire).
  - November 2020 - written correspondence with RBWM and Wokingham to share draft evidence and invite comments.
- 5.6.3 Specific transport discussions on the outputs of the transport modelling have also taken place (see below, **Section 6.4**).
- 5.6.4 At the time of writing this Paper, a further meeting was scheduled with Wokingham Borough and RBWM. Outcomes will be reflected in an updated duty to co-operate statement at Submission stage.

## **6. Duty to co-operate issues and how they have been addressed**

6.1 The following sections provide an overview of the strategic priorities (listed in section 3), and how matters have been addressed.

### **6.1 Homes needed in the area (including affordable housing, Traveller needs, and housing for older people)**

#### Housing

6.1.1 As set out in the Pre-Submission Local Plan, the Plan will allocate sufficient sites to meet the local housing need of the Borough (including a 10% flexibility allowance) to 2037. Therefore, the Council is not requesting other Local Authorities to accommodate any unmet housing need from Bracknell Forest. (Further information is set out in Sections 2.4 of the Housing Background Paper<sup>8</sup>).

6.1.2 Bracknell Forest is adjacent to four local planning authorities, these being Surrey Heath Borough, Hart District, Wokingham Borough and RBWM. It is within the western Berkshire HMA along with Wokingham Borough, West Berks and Reading. As set out in the Housing Background Paper, at this stage, there is no unmet housing need arising from others which needs to be accommodated within Bracknell Forest (see Section 2.2).

6.1.3 Therefore, there are no unresolved duty to co-operate matters with regard to housing need.

#### Gypsy and Traveller provision

6.1.4 Prior to concluding that there were exceptional circumstances to justify the release of 0.4ha of Green Belt to inset a specific traveller site at Jealott's Hill, all adjoining Local Authorities were contacted and formally asked under the duty to co-operate whether they could assist with meeting Bracknell Forest's unmet pitch need. Surrey Heath, Surrey County Council, Wokingham Borough Council, RBWM and Hart District Council all said they were unable to help since they have challenges meeting their own needs. As the need is proposed to be accommodated within the Jealott's Hill allocation<sup>9</sup>, at this stage, the Council is not seeking other Local Authorities to accommodate any unmet need.

6.1.5 Therefore, there are no unresolved duty to co-operate matters with regard to gypsy and traveller needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Pre-Submission Housing Background Paper. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/2i)

<sup>9</sup> Pre-Submission Jealott's Hill Background Paper. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/5h)

## **6.2 Jobs needed in the area**

- 6.2.1 As set out in the Pre-Submission Local Plan, the Plan will allocate sufficient sites to meet the employment needs of the Borough. Therefore, the Council is not requesting that other Local Authorities accommodate any unmet employment need from Bracknell Forest. (Further information is set out in Section 5 of the Economic Background<sup>10</sup>).
- 6.2.2 Bracknell Forest is adjacent to four local planning authorities, namely Surrey Heath Borough, Hart District, Wokingham Borough and RBWM, and is within the Central Berkshire FEMA along with Reading Borough and Wokingham. As set out in the Economic Background Paper, at this stage, there is no unmet employment need arising from other authorities which needs to be accommodated within Bracknell Forest (see Section 3).
- 6.2.3 Therefore, there are no unresolved duty to co-operate matters within regard to employment need.

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<sup>10</sup> Pre-Submission Economic Background Paper. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/3g)

### **6.3 Provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development**

- 6.3.1 As set out in the Pre-Submission Local Plan, there is unlikely to be a positive need for new retail floorspace. Therefore, the Council is not seeking other Local Authorities to accommodate any unmet retail need from Bracknell Forest. (Further information is set out in Section 5 of the Economic Background Paper<sup>11</sup>).
- 6.3.2 Bracknell Forest is adjacent to four local planning authorities, namely Surrey Heath Borough, Hart District, Wokingham Borough and RBWM. As set out in the Economic Background Paper, at this stage, there is no unmet retail need arising from neighbouring authorities others which needs to be accommodated within Bracknell Forest (see Section 3).
- 6.3.3 Therefore, there are no unresolved duty to co-operate matters with regard to retail need.

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<sup>11</sup> Pre-Submission Economic Background Paper. BFC, 2021. (LP/Ev/3g)



## **6.4 Provision of infrastructure/community facilities (including transport)**

### Infrastructure

- 6.4.1 Proposed allocations are expected to fully mitigate their impact through either on-site or in-kind provision. The Council is not relying on provision within other Local Authority areas in order to provide mitigation of the impact of development proposals (for example open space provision). Therefore, at this stage, there are no unresolved duty to co-operate matters within regard to provision of infrastructure.

### Transport

- 6.4.2 In relation to highway matters, as set out above, consultation has taken place on the evidence base. Engagement is an on-going matter as the modelling work has been an iterative process. It has not been possible to conclude the engagement process until the modelling work was completed. This is due to ongoing work to determine the appropriate scale of development, notably at Jealott's Hill, in order to input the correct data into the model to produce final outputs in terms of quantifiable impacts and mitigation measures to facilitate meaningful discussions (such as on resultant traffic flows to the wider road network beyond the Borough boundary).
- 6.4.3 Following completion of this work in early 2021, the Council has undertaken specific engagement on transport matters:
- Meeting with Highways England on 16 February 2021. (Concerns were raised by Highways England regarding the impact of proposed development within Bracknell Forest upon junction 10 of the M4 (the interchange with the A329M).
  - Meeting with adjoining authorities (unitary authorities, and district Councils. This also included County Councils for Hampshire and Surrey, as they are the relevant highway authority). (At the Revised Growth Strategy consultation, concern was raised regarding the cross boundary transport impacts (for example within Wokingham Borough (result from Derby Field and Beaufort), Surrey (such as the Meadows roundabout) and north to RBWM (mainly as a result of the proposed Jealott's Hill allocation). At the time of writing this paper, a specific highway meeting was scheduled to take place in March 2021).
- 6.4.4 Once the highway work is finalised, and meetings have concluded, outcomes will be reflected in an updated duty to co-operate statement at Submission stage.

## **6.5 Natural Environment (including climate change, mitigation and conservation of the natural environment, and Green Belt)**

- 6.5.1 In relation to Green Belt, the proposed land at Jealott's Hill includes compensatory measures (as set out within the proposed Policy and Jealott's Hill Background Paper<sup>12</sup>). At this stage, the Council is not seeking compensatory measures outside of the Borough.
- 6.5.2 In relation to impacts upon Habitat Sites (in particular the SPA), relevant development proposals are required to mitigate their impacts in terms of SANG and SAMM. For some sites SANG would be provided on site, for others this would be through the Council's Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, or other third party sites within the Borough. Therefore, at this stage, the Council is not requiring SANG capacity from other Local Authorities.
- 6.5.3 In relation to effects arising from air quality, at the time of writing this Paper, the Air Quality report had not been concluded. Relevant outcomes will be reflected in an updated duty to co-operate statement at Submission stage.

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<sup>12</sup> Pre-Submission Jealott's Hill Background Paper. BFC, 2021 (LP/Ev/5h)