

Agenda Item IMD2

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2017/02

TITLE	Wokingham Borough Council Consultation response to the RBWM Draft Borough Local Plan (Regulation 18)
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration, Cllr Mark Ashwell
DATE AND TIME	7 February 2017, 2pm
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Interim Director of Environment, Josie Wragg
REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON	30 January 2017
VENUE	LGF4

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Draft Borough Local Plan has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration:

- 1) approves the comments outlined in this report; and
- 2) approves that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation from RBWM on the Draft Borough Local Plan

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report details the proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation on RBWM's Draft Borough Local Plan.

The content of this report includes the following:

- Considering the impact of RBWM's Draft Borough Local Plan on Wokingham Borough.

Background

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) are consulting on a draft ‘Borough Local Plan 2013-2033’ from 2 December 2016 until 13 January 2017. The consultation is under Regulation 18 of Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). It has not been possible to gain executive member sign off by the deadline and this report has therefore been sent as a holding response subject to official sign off.

The consultation marks a change in process by RBWM.

In June 2016 RBWM had made available a draft version of their Submission Borough Local Plan. This plan was published for information and to facilitate engagement. The plan indicated that RBWM would not meet development needs arising from within their authority.

In July 2016, RBWM undertook a legal compliance review of the draft version of their Submission Borough Local Plan in order to find out whether it was likely to be found sound at examination. The review indicated that the plan was likely to be rejected on legal compliance and duty to co-operate grounds. Based upon this advice, RBWM’s Cabinet decided in September 2016 to carry out further work on the Borough Local Plan. The further work has resulted in a revised draft plan, the subject of the current consultation and this report.

Due to procedural timescales this reports has been sent as a holding response subject to full consideration and sign off by Members.

Analysis of Issues

National policy and guidance set out that need should be assessed and met within the functional geographical areas. RBWM is situated within the following functional areas:

Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Borough Council • South Bucks District Council • RBWM
Eastern Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Borough Council • South Bucks District Council • RBWM
Central Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Borough Council • Bracknell Forest Council • Wokingham Borough Council • RBWM

Housing and economic development needs

The consultation draft Borough Local Plan sets out how the housing and economic development needs arising within RBWM will be met, whereas previously this had

not been indicated.

Proposed allocations for housing, which include the release of land from the Green Belt, appear to be sufficient to meet the housing need arising from within RBWM. It is unclear whether the proposed new employment allocation and the intensification of existing employment allocations provides sufficient opportunity to meet the economic needs arising from within RBWM.

Notwithstanding the above, large amounts of supporting information are absent from the consultation, particularly in relation to transport; flooding issues; employment and site assessment. In the absence of this information, it is unknown whether the statements on meeting housing and economic need and the adequacy of the proposed allocations are robust.

Neither the draft plan nor any supporting document sets out how housing and economic needs across the wider functional areas will be met. Previous engagement with Slough Borough Council has indicated that the authority is unlikely to be able to meet their needs. The draft plan does not contain any review mechanism or proposed safeguarded land to address unmet needs arising from Slough Borough.

Whilst no approach has been made to Wokingham Borough Council or any other authority within the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area regarding unmet need, the absence of any information or agreed position is of cross boundary concern.

It is acknowledged that the non-alignment of local plan reviews within the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area makes the consideration of needs more complex. In response the draft plan should be amended to include a review mechanism and provide a clear statement as to how authorities within the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area will work together to meet development needs in full.

It is further recommended that clarification is sought on when further supporting information will become available.

Affordable housing needs

The consultation draft Borough Local Plan sets out that affordable housing will be sought from development proposals involving sites of over 0.5 hectares or proposing 15 or more net additional dwellings. The requirement from qualifying developments is 15%. These requirements are unchanged from the existing adopted RBWM Local Plan (1999, amended 2003).

The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified a high need for affordable housing within the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area, particularly within RBWM (434 new affordable homes per year). The draft plan appears to recognise this context within the supporting text, however the proposed policy does not seek to maximise affordable provision and will result in a supply which is substantially below the assessed need.

Not meeting the need for affordable housing will encourage those in housing need to locate to less expensive areas. It is not clear whether the RBWM has any

viability information which demonstrates that higher levels of affordable housing cannot be achieved. Therefore, they need to fully consider paragraphs 47 and 173 of the NPPF.

Gypsy and traveller housing needs

It is noted that the draft Borough Local Plan refers to meeting the accommodation needs for travelers and that a dedicated Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan will be produced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Finance and Resources	No comment
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	No comment

List of Background Papers
RBWM Draft Borough Local Plan - http://consult.rbwm.gov.uk/portal/blp/blp/blp?tab=info

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