

Agenda Item IMD35

NOTICE OF INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

ITEM NO.	IMD 2015/35
TITLE	Considering the response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation on the Reading Borough Council Duty to Co-Operate Scoping Strategy – September 2015
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning & Highways
DATE AND TIME OF DECISION	17 November 9.05am
VENUE	Room SF2, Shute End Offices
REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON	9 November 2015

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION
REFERENCE IMD: 2015/35**

TITLE	Considering the response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation on the Reading Borough Council Duty to Co-Operate Scoping Strategy – September 2015
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning & Highways)
ON	17 November 2015
TIME	9.05am
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director for the Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That the Reading Borough Council Duty to Co-Operate Scoping Strategy has minimal negative impacts upon the Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised through the duty to co-operate.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Highways:

- 1) approves the comments outlined in the report; and
- 2) that they are submitted as a formal response to the consultation on Reading Borough Council's Duty to Co-Operate Scoping Strategy.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report details the proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation from Reading Borough Council (RBC) on their Duty to Co-Operate Scoping Strategy. The content of this report briefly discusses how RBC have considered the strategic issues which will require co-operation with other authorities/bodies and how it has been demonstrated that those issues which will concern Wokingham have been appropriately highlighted for future consultation.

Background:

Local Planning Authorities, county councils and some other bodies have a legal duty to co-operate on planning for sustainable development, which is contained in Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. This 'duty to cooperate' comprises a major consideration in the plan-making process given that it is the main vehicle for considering those matters which have greater than local significance following the abolition of regional planning. The Scoping Strategy therefore outlines Reading Borough Council's strategy for meeting the duty to co-operate in developing its new local plan.

Analysis of Issues:

The purpose of the Scoping Strategy is to identify the issues to address within Reading Borough Council's local plan that are likely to be strategic matters and which will therefore fall under the duty to co-operate. The document also identifies the specified bodies with whom co-operation may be necessary.

The report highlights 18 areas in which it is considered that Reading Borough Council (RBC) will need to co-operate with other bodies. These areas are:

1. Housing needs and provision
2. Needs and provision for gypsies and travellers
3. Needs and provision for economic development and town centres
4. Strategic transport infrastructure needs and provision
5. Strategic education infrastructure needs and provision
6. Strategic healthcare infrastructure needs and provision
7. Utilities infrastructure needs and provision
8. Strategic landscape considerations
9. Strategic biodiversity considerations
10. Open space and recreation provision
11. Strategic flooding considerations
12. Climate change and mitigation
13. Historic environment
14. Tall buildings and strategic views
15. Approach to planning within the consultation zones of the Atomic Weapons Establishment
16. University of Reading
17. Planning for minerals
18. Planning for waste

Of these 18 strategic matters, the Scoping Strategy identifies that Wokingham Borough Council will be a relevant duty to co-operate body on all matters except for the 'Historic Environment'. Wokingham Borough Council is in agreement with the approach taken in this document. WBC is already working with Reading and the other Berkshire authorities on certain areas including the need for housing. WBC welcomes the duty to cooperate discussions on the identified areas.

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)	There are no direct costs associated with the duty-to-co-operate	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including property and priorities?)

The scoping strategy sets out those areas on which Reading Borough Council will engage with Wokingham Borough Council. WBC welcomes duty to co-operate discussions on the identified areas. The strategy does not dictate the specific measures that RBC intends to use to undertake the duty to co-operate, but it is intended that such discussions will be had with each specific duty to co-operate body in order to seek a way forward. The strategy already recognises that Wokingham Borough Council and Reading (as well as other Berkshire Authorities) are working together to satisfy the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate test. The strategy will help to ensure that cross boundary infrastructure impacts are taken into account concerning those strategic issues that the Scoping Report refers to.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Head of Finance	No comment received
Head of Audit	No specific comments
Finance Business Partnering	No comment received
Leader of the Council	Fully supports the recommendations
Executive Member	No comment

List of Background Papers

Reading Borough Council Duty to Co-Operate Scoping Strategy – September 2015

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