

Agenda Item IMD12

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD: 2016/12

TITLE	WBC response to Reading Borough Council on their Local Plan Issues and Options document (January 2016)
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways
DATE AND TIME	14 March 2016, 11.35am
WARD	Non-specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON	4 March 2016
VENUE	Room SF2, Council Offices, Shute End

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that Reading Borough Council's Local Plan has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Highways

- 1) approves the comments outlined in this report; and
- 2) approves that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation from Reading Borough Council on their Issues and Options consultation on their local plan.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report details the proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the Initial (Regulation 18) Consultation Incorporating Issues and Options regarding Reading Borough Council's Local Plan.

The content of this report includes the following:

- Considering the impact of Reading Borough Council's Issues and Options document on Wokingham Borough Council.

Background

The evidence underpinning the housing requirement within a local plan must be based upon full objectively assessed need (OAN) as stated in paragraph 159 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that the local plan must meet the full OAN in the housing market area. The OAN is assessed at the functional housing market area.

The 2016 SHMA sets out that 2,855 homes need to be provided per annum across the Western Housing Market Area (HMA), which comprises Wokingham, Reading, West Berkshire and Reading Boroughs. The OAN figure for Reading BC is 699 homes per annum.

Analysis of issues

Housing

As set out in paragraph 3.9 of their report, Reading BC are considering four options in terms of meeting their housing need. The options range from meeting their OAN, providing more than OAN or less than their OAN. The option re providing around 630 homes each year, is based on the maximum that might be achievable without any additional loss of greenfield land, employment areas or increase in development of garden land. This figure is based on their initial estimate but may be refined at a later date.

With regard to affordable housing, the Council does not currently propose to make significant changes, which are that they seek 30% of provision on larger sites.

As set out in paragraph 3.22, Reading BC are to undertake a new Gypsy and Traveler Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) using the methodology agreed with all of the Berkshire unitary authorities.

Employment / Retail

There are four options in terms of how to manage the relationship (balance) between employment development and housing ranging from placing on employment development based on how much housing is to be provided in the wider housing market area or alternatively just within Reading through to not limiting employment development.

Reading BC consider that there is unlikely to be a need for major retail expansion in Reading, as since 2005 there has been little demand for major additional retail in Reading. Reading BC mention that the new retail study (commissioned by the Western HMA authorities in 2016) will inform the draft plan.

Where will development go?

Figure 4.2 indicates known sites and possible sites for new housing and the main potential is likely to be in Central Reading and to the South / South West of the Borough.

The sites are not allocated in the Local Plan but will be considered through the Local Plan process. Some of the sites (mainly those sites in South and South West of Reading) could have an impact upon Wokingham Borough Council in terms of transportation and cross boundary movement for jobs and housing if they are to be

allocated / come forward. There are several sites located to the west of Whitley that are located within 2km of the administrative boundary with Wokingham Borough Council that could each accommodate over 500 new homes (including sites A24, A29, A39). The potential mixed use development at the Madejski Stadium (Site A32 located on the border of Wokingham Borough Council) could accommodate 630 homes, a hotel, office space and a transport interchange. Wokingham Borough Council requests that Reading Borough Council continues to engage Wokingham Borough Council over the development of these sites and any others to the south and west of Reading Borough, as part of the Duty to Cooperate process.

Paragraph 4.9 shows that Reading BC consider that their remaining housing requirement once permissions are allocations are taken into account, is 4,500 net dwellings up to 2036. This does rely on existing development plan allocations being carried forward in, largely, their current form.

Reading BC have considered what sources of sites could be used for housing development, including greenfield sites and redevelopment of employment land.

Paragraphs 4.14 – 4.16 makes reference to development outside Reading Borough. Paragraph 4.16 makes it clear that “at this stage, it is too early to say whether provision will need to be made outside Reading, or whether Reading will need to meet other authorities’ needs’.

Paragraphs 5.30 and 5.31 makes it clear that *“the Council will need to consider which items of infrastructure are essential to support the development proposed. This will form an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule”*.

Conclusions

This is an early stage of the Local Plan process and more detail will be provided at the next stage of the process. Reading Borough Council therefore needs to take into consideration the impact of the Local Plan on Wokingham Borough Council in terms of housing, cross-boundary movement, infrastructure, jobs and transportation. Wokingham BC therefore requests that Reading Borough Council continues to consult with Wokingham Borough Council as work on the Local Plan progresses, through the Duty to Cooperate.

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
N/A

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

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Finance and Resources	No comment
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	I fully support the comments in this report

List of Background Papers
Reading Borough Council's Local Plan Issues and Options document (January 2016)
Local Plan Issues and Options Summary Leaflet

Contact Heather Read	Service Land Use and Transport Team
Telephone No 0118 974 6453	Email Heather.read@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 3 March 2016	Version No. 1