

Regulation 22 Consultation Statement for the

West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039

March 2023

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Consultation Statement sets out how the Council has involved residents and key stakeholders in preparing the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 (LPR) in accordance with Regulations 18 and 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement meets Regulation 22 (1)(c) and demonstrates that consultation on the preparation of the LPR has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted in January 2020.

The SCI sets out the Council's policy, and standards it will seek to achieve, to ensure meaningful and effective consultation, engagement and involvement of consultees, stakeholders and other interested members of the community in the preparation of documents that make up the Local Plan and in the consideration of planning applications that are determined by the Council. Full details of the current adopted SI can be viewed at <https://westberks.gov.uk/statement-community-involvement>

1.2 Background

This Consultation Statement describes how the Council has undertaken community participation and stakeholder involvement in the production of the LPR, setting out how such efforts have shaped the Plan and the main issues raised by consultation / representations.

The Council began reviewing the existing Local Plan for the District in 2018. The LPR will set out the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the District, as well as the planning policies which will guide future development. The LPR will look ahead to 2039, and identify the main areas for sustainable development growth. It establishes policies and guidance to ensure local development is built in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The LPR will replace the following –

- West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) (2006-2026) (adopted 2012)
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2017)
- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies)

The Council's Proposed Submission LPR and supporting documents, including the sustainability appraisal, were published in accordance with Regulation 19 for a six week consultation period lasting from Friday 20th January until Friday 3rd March 2023. The Council consulted specific consultation and statutory bodies, local amenity and residents' groups, businesses and individual residents. A variety of consultation techniques were used in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement.

1.3 Structure of Statement

This Statement of Consultation comprises of four sections:

Section 1 is an introduction

Section 2 sets out the timeline which has been followed in preparing the Local Plan which is accordance with the up to date Local Development Scheme (provide link).

Section 3 summarises the main issues raised during the course of the consultation carried out under Regulations 18/19 and how the comments received have been considered by the Council.

Section 3 is supported by the two Appendices found at Section 4 detailing how consultation was undertaken and the responses received at Regulation 18 and 20 stages.

Appendix 1 explains:

- who was invited to make representations and how (Regulation 22 (1)(c)(i) and (ii))
- a summary of the main issues raised by those persons (Regulation 22 (1)(c)(iii)) in Plan order and
- how those issues have been addressed in the preparation of the LPR (Regulation 22 (1)(c)(iv)).

Appendix 2 explains:

- how the Regulation 19 LPR consultation was undertaken and the number of representations made including a summary of the main issues (Regulation 22 (1)(c)(v))

2.0 LPR Production Timeline

The revision of the Local Plan requires a number of thorough and robust stages of consultation. This is to enable early and ongoing engagement with the local community, businesses and organisations to develop a comprehensive document, tailored to the needs of West Berkshire in terms of strategy and the policies required.

The below timetable outlines main consultation stages of the emerging LPR up until the Submission date of the 23rd March 2023.

Key Stages Undertaken

1. Identify issues and collect evidence: from 2018

The Council began consulting on the scope and content of the LPR in 2018. It reviewed existing policies and identified any current gaps in policies or evidence base. It also began undertaking further research to inform the LPR.

2. Emerging Draft LPR consultation: December 2020

In December 2020 the Council published the emerging draft version of the LPR for public consultation from 11th December 2020 to 5th February 2021.

3. LPR amendments: 2021-2022

The Council took on board comments received during the consultation and the evidence base was also updated to improve the LPR ready for formal consultation/submission.

4. Publish Proposed Submission LPR for Regulation 19 consultation: 20th January 2023

A submission ready version of the LPR was made available for stakeholders and the public to comment on for a minimum of 6 weeks. In accordance with the Local Plan Regulations, this consultation was formal and statutory seeking specifically the LPR's soundness for Examination in Public.

5. Submission to the Secretary of State: March 2023

The Council assessed the comments received during the Regulation 19 formal consultation and considered that the LPR is sound, therefore, can be submitted for Examination in Public (EiP). The LPR was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 23rd March 2023.

6. Examination: Summer 2023

The LPR will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector.

7. Adopt: September 2024

3.0 Summary of Process and Main Issues

Summary of process under Regulation 18

The review of the Local Plan started in 2018 and included public consultation on the scope and content of the LPR and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report in February and March of that year, a second round of consultation in November/December 2018, focused consultation with town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups in February 2020 and then consultation on the Emerging Draft LPR in December 2020/February 2021. Further details are set out in Appendix 1 – Consultation under Regulation 18.

Where relevant, documents prepared as part of the [evidence base](#) have been subject to a specific consultation with technical experts, statutory bodies and other stakeholders as appropriate. Further details are set out in the individual documents themselves which are available on the Council's website.

Summary of process under Regulation 19

In January 2023 the Council published the Proposed Submission version of the LPR for public consultation from 20th January 2023 to 4:30pm on 3rd March 2023. Further details are set out in Appendix 2 – Consultation under Regulation 19.

Main issues raised pursuant to Regulation 19/20:

A summary of the key issues raised in the representations are included within Appendix 2 with further detail set out in Annexes M to Q.

At a strategic level, the main issues raised are considered to be –

- The LPR's approach to the delivery of housing – meeting the Local Housing Need requirement in full, the use of a range, meeting Reading's unmet needs and whether the housing buffer is sufficient
- The strategic approach to employment land
- The strategic development allocation at North East Thatcham – the location, nature and scale of development and the potential impacts on the environment and local infrastructure, particularly traffic, health and education
- The spatial strategy and the constraints imposed by the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) around the Atomic Weapons Establishments at (AWE) Aldermaston and Burghfield

4.0 Duty to Cooperate (DtC)

Consultation overlaps with engagement and liaison under the Duty to Cooperate. The Council has a Duty to Cooperate when preparing the LPR. This Duty was introduced in the Localism Act of 2011 and requires us to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies (Set out in Part 2 (4(1)) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) in preparing the LPR in order to address strategic issues relevant to our area. It requires that we engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to develop strategic policies; and requires us to consider joint approaches to plan making. At the heart of the Duty is effective partnership working to achieve outcomes. Except where specifically mentioned, this Statement does not cover the Council's engagement, liaison and working with other local authorities and bodies under the Duty to Cooperate.

The Council has produced a separate Duty to Cooperate Statement that sets out the details of the engagement and liaison carried out under this duty and this is published alongside the Submission LPR.

5.0 Conclusion

This statement meets Regulation 22 (1)(c) and demonstrates that consultation on the preparation of the LPR has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted in January 2020.