



# Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Update

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## Issues and Options Consultation (Autumn 2020)



Basingstoke  
and Deane

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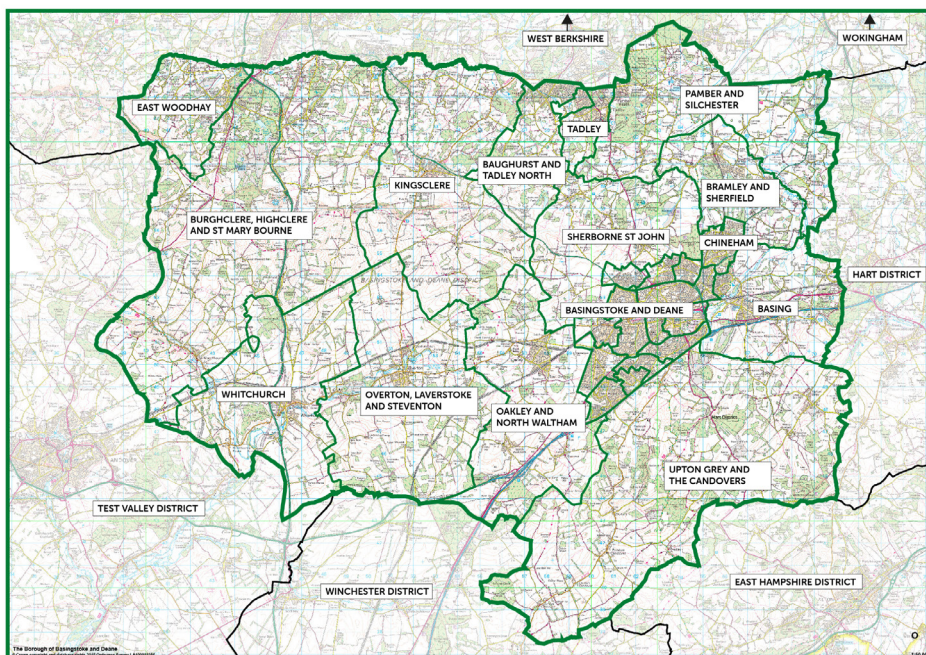


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# 1. Background to this consultation

## 1.1 What is a Local Plan?

Basingstoke and Deane already has a Local Plan to guide development in the borough. This was adopted in 2016 and covers the period 2011 to 2029. All councils must prepare a Local Plan which acts as an area's primary planning document, directing growth and change to appropriate locations. It includes a spatial strategy, allocating land for future growth to meet needs, in addition to more detailed policies to guide decisions on planning applications. The plan covers all types of development, from housing to employment, schools, roads, parks, shops and community facilities. The Local Plan applies to the whole of Basingstoke and Deane Borough.



## 1.2 Why are we updating the Local Plan now?

In 2019 the council agreed to launch an update to the current Plan. This reflects new national requirements to review Local Plans every five years to ensure they remain up to date whilst continuing to meet changing needs.

## 1.3 What are the key aims of the update?

Monitoring has shown that the current Local Plan has generally been performing well since its adoption four years ago. As such, many of the policies may be carried forward into an updated Plan. However, the opportunity should now be taken to strengthen the Plan in a number of key areas to ensure that local aspirations and needs are met. This includes tackling the climate emergency, creating beautiful places through a greater emphasis on place making, and ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure to support potentially significant levels of growth.

The Local Plan Update (referred to as Local Plan Update throughout this consultation document) will need to set out a spatial strategy for delivering required development over a longer time period, meeting statutory requirements placed on the borough at a national level. This includes an increase in housing delivery to meet the Government's commitment to tackling the country's housing crisis.

## 1.4 What is the timetable for updating the Plan?

The updated Plan will cover the period up to at least 2038, fifteen years from the expected date of adoption in 2023. The council has published a [timetable](#) for updating the Plan but this has been delayed, to some degree, by the recent coronavirus pandemic which has also resulted in the local borough elections due to take place in 2020 being pushed back to 2021. An updated timetable is outlined below.

<b>Autumn 2020</b>	Issues and Options Consultation
<b>Winter 2021</b>	Consultation on a draft Plan (Regulation 18)
<b>Winter 2022</b>	Publication of a submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 19)
<b>Spring 2023</b>	Submission (Regulation 22)
<b>Summer 2023</b>	Examination and main modifications
<b>Spring 2024</b>	Adoption

## 1.5 Why are we consulting on Issues and Options?

As outlined in the timetable above, the Local Plan Update process has a number of formal statutory stages which will take place over the next few years. This includes consultation on draft versions of the plan. This Issues and Options paper is the first formal but non-statutory consultation in the plan making process. Its main purpose is to ensure that the Plan will cover the right issues and that all suitable options for accommodating change are considered.

This is your opportunity to feed into the Local Plan Update process at an early stage and help shape the future plan and, in turn, the future of your borough.

## 1.6 What does this mean for Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood Planning enables local communities to come together to produce a plan for their local area. Such Plans have the same status in the planning process as Local Plans but they must be in conformity with the Local Plan and also national planning guidance. The Local Plan is therefore a framework within which local communities can develop plans for their area. Neighbourhood Planning has been strongly supported in Basingstoke and Deane, by both the council and local communities. Ten neighbourhood plans have already been made in the borough's rural areas, with more in the pipeline. These plans will continue to form part of the development plan for their areas, guiding development at a local level. However, the most up to date plan takes precedence and therefore once the Local Plan Update is adopted it will supersede parts of neighbourhood plans which do not comply with it. It is recommended that new and developing neighbourhood plans take account of the Local Plan Update as they are developed and that made plans are reviewed in light of the Local Plan Update. The council will support communities through this process.

## 1.7 What are the implications of the Government's proposed changes to the planning system on this consultation?

The Government published two consultations on the future of the planning system in August including a White Paper: Planning for the Future. These proposed a fundamental shake up to streamline and modernise all aspects of planning, including Local Plan making. The council will need to consider the implications of the changes in due course, as legislation and national guidance is updated. It is acknowledged that the changes may result in some of the following options no longer being relevant for example, as standards may be set nationally with a restriction on any further local policies. However, this is unknown at this point. Given the early stage in the process and also the current level of uncertainty it is considered suitable to continue with the consultation to ensure that the council is in a robust position to act on the changes when they are implemented, and ensure that the views of stakeholders are known to the council and can help shape the approaches taken.

## 1.8 How long will this consultation last?

The consultation will run from Monday 28 September 2020 until Monday 9 November 2020. Representations should arrive no later than 4pm on Monday 9 November 2020. All representations received will be made available to view publicly.

## 1.9 How can I comment?

The consultation document and supporting documents can be found on the council website at: [www.basingstoke.gov.uk/Issues-and-Options](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/Issues-and-Options)

If you would like to make comments, please reference specific questions, sections or paragraph numbers and be as specific as possible. You are not required to comment on all of the questions in the Issues and Options document and you can complete as many questions as desired.

Please send your comments in one of the following ways:

- By submitting your comments through the council's online Consultation Portal (Objective) where there is an electronic form, via: <https://basingstoke-consult.objective.co.uk/portal>
- Although we prefer you to use the online consultation portal if you have access to the internet an electronic response form can also be downloaded from the Issues and Options webpage on the council's website. The form can be submitted, via email, to [Local.Plan@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:Local.Plan@basingstoke.gov.uk)
- You can also download a response form on the council's website which can be printed and returned by post to Planning Policy Team, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4AH. Alternatively, if you do not have access to the internet you can request a paper response form by calling the council's contact centre on 01256 844844.



If you would like any of the Issues and Options Consultation information in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, please contact [customer.service@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:customer.service@basingstoke.gov.uk) or call the council's Contact Centre on 01256 844844.

Alongside the Issues and Options Consultation, the council is also inviting comments on a number of supporting documents, including a Promoted Sites Document, Site Assessment Methodology, Settlement Study (Part 1) and a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Document. Comments on these documents can be submitted by email or post using the details above. Comments on the supporting documents cannot be submitted using Objective.

### 1.10 What will happen to my comments?

Your comments will help shape the draft Local Plan Update, due for publication in 2021. A schedule of comments will be made available on the [council website](#) following the consultation period, along with further information on how the council proposes to take these comments forward into the next stage of preparing the Plan.

If you would like to be added to the Local Plan database in order to be kept informed, please contact the planning policy team on 01256 844844 or email [local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk)

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Our borough - past, present and future

#### 2.1.1

The borough, which covers an area of over 245 square miles of north Hampshire, has seen significant change over the last 20 years. Basingstoke Town, which is the focus for key services and employment, has grown significantly, with new and regenerated residential areas, improved leisure and community facilities and a new regional shopping centre, with Festival Place opening in 2002 followed by further investment in the Malls. The town is surrounded by attractive rural areas and its network of rural towns and villages has also continued to grow and change with new housing being built to meet needs. Physical changes have been accompanied by big changes in the way that we live and work, for example, with the internet revolutionising the way we carry out our day to day lives.

#### 2.1.2

The borough is one of the most dynamic and prosperous places to live in the country with a high quality rural and urban environment and excellent accessibility by road and rail. The borough's rural area, a significant proportion of which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is characterised by its dispersed network of towns, villages and hamlets each with their own identity; large areas of agriculture and woodland (over 83% of the borough's land); its wealth of heritage assets; its diverse biodiversity; and nationally important chalk

rivers including the Rivers Loddon and Test. Quality of life is good with relatively high levels of prosperity and well-being. Overall, residents are positive about living in Basingstoke and Deane and the vast majority are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (95%). The economy is strong and diverse with relatively low levels of unemployment.

### 2.1.3

The borough will continue to change significantly over the next twenty years. The area is a focus for growth and change and this needs to be planned for in order to ensure that it is suitably accommodated whilst the borough's natural assets and heritage are protected and enhanced. In addition to growth, other broader issues will need to be considered, the most notable of which are climate change (which could lead to temperature rises and increased flood risk), technological change (which could lead to increased use of Artificial Intelligence and robotics, for example) and an ageing population (with one in four of the UK population being over 65 by 2050). The Local Plan is a key tool in ensuring that change is managed appropriately, with development directed to the most sustainable places and supported by suitable infrastructure without putting pressure on existing communities, the environment, and our heritage and built assets.

## 2.2 What are the aims of the Local Plan Update?

### 2.2.1

The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development, ensuring that better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)). This is based around three pillars or roles:

- Economic – contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- Social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- Environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

### 2.2.2

The Local Plan is a key tool for ensuring that sustainable development is delivered in the borough over coming years, and to do this it needs its own vision and objectives which reflect local issues and ambitions.

### 2.2.3

The Local Plan will build upon other relevant strategies and plans of the council and its partners, including the Council Plan (2020-2024) which sets priorities to ensure the borough continues to be a great place to live, providing opportunities for everyone who lives and works here.



## 2.2.4

The council has already developed a long term ambitious vision for the borough called Horizon 2050. This shared vision, also adopted by the Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership, sets a high level framework for the work of the council and its partners, aiming to ensure that residents have high quality homes, jobs and leisure and community facilities for decades to come. Whilst it is not a strategy or policy, it reflects the aspirations of the different organisations and residents who contributed their ideas about what is important and right for the borough and therefore provides useful information for planning the future of the borough. The vision covers eight different themes which are reflected throughout this document and which cover such issues as housing; healthy, safe and inclusive communities; transport; education, the natural environment; sustainability; economy and entrepreneurship; and a borough with heritage and distinction.

## 3. The national and regional picture

### 3.1 Current trends

#### 3.1.1

The Government has highlighted its ongoing commitment to the planned system, seeing it as a key way of delivering many of its objectives including an increase in house building nationally and raising the standard of design in new developments. The Local Plan Update will need to be in line with national policy and guidance, and take account of any changes that the Government makes to relevant guidance whilst the Local Plan Update is evolving. The council needs to be alert to these changes and the Local Plan Update must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate new circumstances.

#### 3.1.2

The borough must also be seen in the context of the wider area, with the Local Plan Update taking account of regional challenges, issues and opportunities. This includes such issues as housing and economic growth in neighbouring authorities, across the region and beyond; the relative connectivity of the area's strategic transport network including road, rail and air; and cross boundary environmental issues such as ensuring the quality of the area's water environment and tackling the climate emergency.

#### 3.1.3

A fundamental part of the Local Plan Update will therefore be to consider what opportunities exist to develop an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of strategic infrastructure, housing provision and economic growth across the wider area taking account of current trends. The council will continue to work closely with neighbouring and other relevant authorities, in addition to key regional stakeholders including the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Hampshire County Council (HCC), to ensure relevant issues are considered and that the borough continues to fulfil an influential role in the region.

## 4. Key issues for the Local Plan Update

### 4.1 Overview

#### 4.1.1

A number of key issues have been identified for consideration through the Local Plan Update process. In many cases, these reflect the specific characteristics of the borough, alongside more wide-ranging trends that will impact upon the area. Issues identified also reflect the ambitions of the council, highlighting priority areas for action and change. These key issues have informed the development of objectives within a Sustainability Appraisal which will be completed alongside the development of the Local Plan Update. The sustainability objectives will be used to assess and inform site selection and policy making throughout the Local Plan Update process, to ensure that the key issues are suitably addressed and that the Plan achieves the most sustainable development. [The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#) sets out the identified social, economic and environmental issues, along with the assessment framework against which the Local Plan Update options will be judged.

#### 4.1.2

Key issues that have been identified so far have been grouped together and are summarised below.

### 4.2 Key issues

#### 1) Tackling the Climate Emergency

- Supporting the council's Climate Change Strategy, embedding ambitious sustainability principles and targets into the Plan;
- Ensuring new development is as energy efficient as possible in order to reduce carbon emissions;
- Supporting a positive approach to renewable energy; and
- Planning to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on flooding, water resources, air, water and soil pollution, temperature changes and biodiversity, as well as managing and improving our natural environment to help to offset its impact.

#### 2) Focusing on place shaping and design

- Raising the standard of design and of build quality across the borough;
- Supporting local distinctiveness;
- Ensuring the creation of safe and healthy places.

### 3) Protecting and enhancing our environment and heritage

- Protecting and enhancing the borough's key environmental assets including its attractive landscape, the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North Hampshire Downs;
- Enabling better connected and managed priority habitats and the delivery of biodiversity net gain;
- Improving air and water quality where possible, protecting all aspects of our water environment including groundwater, maintaining river flows and ensuring that new development does not negatively impact upon the water quality of the River Loddon or designated sites in the Solent through the River Test and Itchen catchments;
- Providing protection for the borough's parks and open spaces, particularly those valued by local communities, and improving our green networks;
- Ensuring development contributes positively to the borough's green infrastructure, including an increase in tree canopy cover; and
- Preserving and enhancing the borough's rich heritage and its cultural offer, integrating new development with respect.

### 4) Meeting the needs of all

- Meeting the borough population's changing needs - both as a result of demographic changes such as the growing ageing population, and changing lifestyles and work practices;
- Seeking to meet the requirements of those most in need, including through the provision of suitable affordable housing;
- Adopting a Plan which is flexible enough to accommodate and respond to rapid change;
- Continuing to support neighbourhood planning as the most suitable tool to guide local development; and
- Supporting and delivering regeneration where needed.

### 5) Providing the right housing

- Ensuring the provision of new homes, addressing issues of affordability and ensuring appropriate and accessible homes for everyone;
- Ensuring a suitable mix of homes that are the right size, type and tenure and encouraging alternative forms of supply, such as self-build;
- Allocating a supply of deliverable housing sites which vary in size and location, to ensure that the five year supply of housing is maintained such that speculative development that encroaches upon the countryside is avoided;
- Maintaining the identity of rural towns and villages, whilst ensuring that needs for housing and facilities etc. are met;
- Maximising brownfield development where possible, and regenerating Basingstoke Town's more dated residential areas built during the rapid expansion of the 1960s; and
- Ensuring the safety of the population around AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield whilst meeting local housing needs.

## 6) Facilitating infrastructure delivery

- Facilitating the timely delivery of infrastructure such as roads, schools, utilities, green infrastructure and community facilities and services so they are available in line with development;
- Facilitating the delivery of significant new infrastructure, where suitable, to strengthen access to quality services and facilities, including a potential new hospital and higher education provision;
- Facilitating a step change in how people travel, with the delivery of an efficient and rapid public transport network with safe and high quality walking and cycling routes to provide alternatives to the car;
- Locating development in sustainable locations, reducing both the need to travel and vehicle emissions;
- Exploring the delivery a new transport hub at Station Approach in Basingstoke together with the regeneration of the surrounding area to improve accessibility to Basing View and Eastrop Park; and
- Retaining and improving essential facilities and services, including outside of Basingstoke Town.

## 7) Supporting economy and centres

- Maintaining a growing and diverse economy, providing an environment in which new businesses can prosper, small businesses can grow, and larger businesses will want to be located;
- Regenerating existing employment sites that are reaching the end of their functional life, to maintain a supply of employment land which is of the right quality, type and size in light of changing demands;
- Continuing the regeneration of Basing View into a modern and attractive business park;
- Supporting all of the borough's town, district and local centres as they adapt to changing trends and demands;
- Providing a framework for a vital and vibrant Basingstoke town centre, including the Top of the Town area;
- Regenerating the Leisure Park as a regional leisure destination.

### Section 4 – Questions:

4(a) Do you agree with the key issues that have been identified?

4(b) Are there any other issues which you consider to be central to the Local Plan Update?



## 5. Tackling the Climate Emergency



### 5.1 Current position

#### 5.1.1

The impacts of climate change are highly likely to affect the borough and its residents in the future. The council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 which pledges for the council's emissions to become carbon neutral by 2025 and the borough to become net zero carbon by 2030. Meeting these targets is a key aim for the current Council Plan (2020-2024) and the future sustainability of the borough was highlighted as a key area of concern for residents through the Horizon 2050 consultation. Many parish councils in the borough have also made their own climate emergency declarations.

#### 5.1.2

Planning has a key role to play in supporting and enabling the transition to a low carbon future, with local policies encouraged to take a positive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. The council is keen to take a proactive approach to climate change through the Local Plan Update and has commissioned research to gain a better understanding of the impacts of climate change upon the borough and to inform the proposed policies. The Local Plan Update provides the opportunity to positively influence the future of the borough through the provision of practical solutions, building upon the framework currently being put together through the development of a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy.

#### 5.1.3

The current Local Plan includes policies relevant to mitigating and adapting to climate change, but there is recognition that more needs to be done. The Local Plan Update is an opportunity to guarantee that development in the borough contributes to the creation of a greener, more sustainable and resilient environment. The challenge of addressing climate change will inform and influence all parts of the Local Plan Update, not just the specific policy areas highlighted below.

### 5.2 Energy standards for new development

#### 5.2.1

Reducing energy consumption is central to tackling climate change. It is therefore essential that new development is built to the highest energy standards. The current Local Plan does not set energy standards that go beyond building regulations for any types of buildings.

## 5.2.2

At present, there are no restrictions on the council specifying energy standards for non-residential buildings. However, national policy currently only allows local planning authorities to set the energy performance standards for new homes at 20% above Building Regulations. However, in order to deliver the council's ambitious climate change targets, the council recognises that a higher standard is required. Consideration should therefore be given to the suitability of requiring all development to be zero carbon through the Local Plan Update.

## 5.2.3

In accordance with the energy hierarchy, new development would be expected to make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emissions by minimising the energy use ('fabric first') of new buildings. Residual emissions could then be offset through the delivery of on-site renewable or low-carbon energy for the overall development. Where it is not feasible to reach the required standard on site, the council could also consider collecting money to offset emissions elsewhere in the borough.

## 5.2.4

In light of the above, the council could consider setting policy requirements to ensure development follows the energy hierarchy. This would, for example, require development to offset a proportion of carbon through fabric improvements or a proportion of carbon through on-site renewable or low carbon energy. These would ensure a proportion of carbon reductions are achieved onsite.

## 5.2.5

It is recognised that the Government ran a consultation in 2019 on the introduction of a Future Homes Standard. This proposed options to increase energy efficiency requirements for new homes in 2020, through changes to Building Regulations and a new national standard for homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and increased energy efficiency in 2025. The consultation also proposed removing the ability of local planning authorities to set their own energy efficiency standards for new dwellings. The outcomes of this consultation have not yet been published, but they may affect the council's ability to set energy efficiency standards in the Local Plan Update. The Government has also indicated that they would consult on similar requirements for non-residential buildings.



## Options for energy standards

### Option 1:

Require all new development to reach net zero carbon.

### Option 2:

Require an uplift in energy efficiency standards for new homes to approximately 20% above the Building Regulations.

### Option 3:

Continue with the current approach and require new development to meet the Building Regulations or future equivalent.

## Section 5 – Questions:

5(a) Which option is the most suitable energy standard for new homes and non-residential buildings? Should all types and scales of development be required to meet these standards?

5(b) Should the council require a minimum proportion of carbon to be reduced by:

- improvements to the building's fabric, and/or
- on-site renewable or low carbon energy?

5(c) Are there any other options we should be considering?

## 5.3 Sustainability requirements for new development

### 5.3.1

In addition to energy efficiency, it is important to ensure development uses water, minerals, materials and other natural resources efficiently.

### 5.3.2

The sustainability of new non-residential buildings can be measured using [BREEAM](#) standards. BREEAM is an independently accredited method for assessing and rating environmental performance that is widely used in Local Plans. A scoring system is used to evaluate a building's sustainability, including energy and water use, the internal environment (health and well-being), pollution, transport, materials, waste, ecology and management processes. Ratings are awarded based on how the development has scored against the relevant criteria. The Local Plan Update could set a requirement for non-residential developments to achieve a specific BREEAM rating. Initial work has indicated that a BREEAM 'Excellent' standard may provide an appropriate balance between building performance and cost, but it is recognised that the feasibility of achieving this standard may vary between building types.

### 5.3.3

National guidance restricts the types of sustainability requirements that a Local Plan can set for new homes. However, the Plan could encourage developers to use the [BRE Home Quality Mark](#) which certifies the sustainability of new homes against an assessment framework, in a similar way to the non-residential BREEAM standard.

### 5.3.4

One area that the Plan can influence, however, is domestic water use. As it is predicted that rainfall will become more variable and unpredictable, new homes should be designed to consume less water. This could be achieved through water-efficient fittings, such as low flush toilets, or through water conservation techniques such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling. Building Regulations currently require new homes to meet a water efficiency standard of 125 litres per person per day. However, national guidance allows local planning authorities to implement an optional technical standard of 110 litres per person per day where it can be justified. This standard is a requirement of the current Local Plan and is still currently considered to be appropriate for the Local Plan Update.

### 5.3.5

Policies could also seek to promote sustainable approaches to waste, including measures to minimise the generation of waste during both the construction and life of the building.

#### Section 5 – Questions:

5(d) Should the council introduce a requirement for non-residential buildings to achieve a BREEAM standard. If so, which level should it be set at?

5(e) Are there any specific viability issues to consider when setting requirements for non-residential buildings/uses?

5(f) Other than by meeting BREEAM standards, how should applicants demonstrate that they have considered sustainable design and construction in their development?

5(g) Are there any other options we should be considering?



## 5.4 Mitigating and adapting to climate change through design

### 5.4.1

Good design has a role in reducing the energy use of new developments and mitigating climate change. Considerations will vary between developments of different scale, but could include the density and form of the development; the mix of uses; site layout including the orientation of streets and buildings; and the detailed design of buildings and the choice of materials. The detailed design of buildings can also influence how much energy occupiers use (for example, by providing buildings with a comfortable internal environment), and deliver a range of other sustainability benefits (for example, through providing opportunities for recycling and composting).

### 5.4.2

Measures that allow new development to adapt and be resilient to climate change should also be integrated into developments. For example, buildings should be designed so they do not overheat (through measures such as ventilation, choice of materials and location of glazing), the use of sustainable drainage systems can reduce surface water flooding, and tree planting can provide shading and reduce temperatures. It is also important to take into account the role of ecosystem services. Ecosystem services can be defined as the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, including the provision of clean water and protection against flooding.

#### Section 5 – Questions:

5(h) Would you support the introduction of a specific policy on design measures that would mitigate climate change, support adaptation, and embed sustainable design requirements? What should this include?



## 5.5 Renewable and low carbon energy

### 5.5.1

The change from fossil fuels to energy which is generated from renewable energy sources is crucial in securing a low carbon future and therefore the Local Plan Update should take a positive approach to renewable energy. The current local plan supports commercial generation of energy from renewable and low carbon resources (excluding wind turbines). Additionally, some small scale developments for renewable energy, such as solar panels, have been built in the borough through the use of national permitted development rights.

## 5.5.2

In order to support renewable energy, the council could consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources in the Local Plan Update. This would provide a presumption in favour of relevant planning applications in those areas. Although this could help to increase the amount of renewable energy generated, there is a risk that if this was carried out at a borough-wide level it may not reflect the aspirations of local communities. Instead, neighbourhood plans could be encouraged to identify suitable areas for renewable energy, taking advantage of more detailed local knowledge. The Local Plan Update could also support the development of community-owned renewable energy where there is clear evidence of local community involvement and leadership, even when it comes forward outside a neighbourhood plan.

## 5.5.3

The Local Plan Update could also support the delivery of district heating networks. These provide low carbon heat from a central source directly to homes and businesses through a network of pipes carrying hot water. This approach is most suitable where there is a high density of built development including a mix of building types. At present there are no district heat networks in the borough, however initial studies indicate that a district heat network could be feasible and viable near the incinerator at Chineham and on the Leisure Park. There may also be opportunities on large-scale residential-led development sites. Where networks are established, planning policies could be used to require other nearby developments to connect into them.

### Options for delivering low carbon and renewable energy and associated infrastructure:

#### Option 1:

Identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources and their supporting infrastructure in the Local Plan Update.

#### Option 2:

Encourage the allocation of specific renewable and low carbon energy sources or infrastructure through neighbourhood plans and support community-led schemes.



## Section 5 – Questions:

5(i) Would you support the above options for delivering low carbon and renewable energy and associated infrastructure?

5(j) Are there any other options we should be considering?

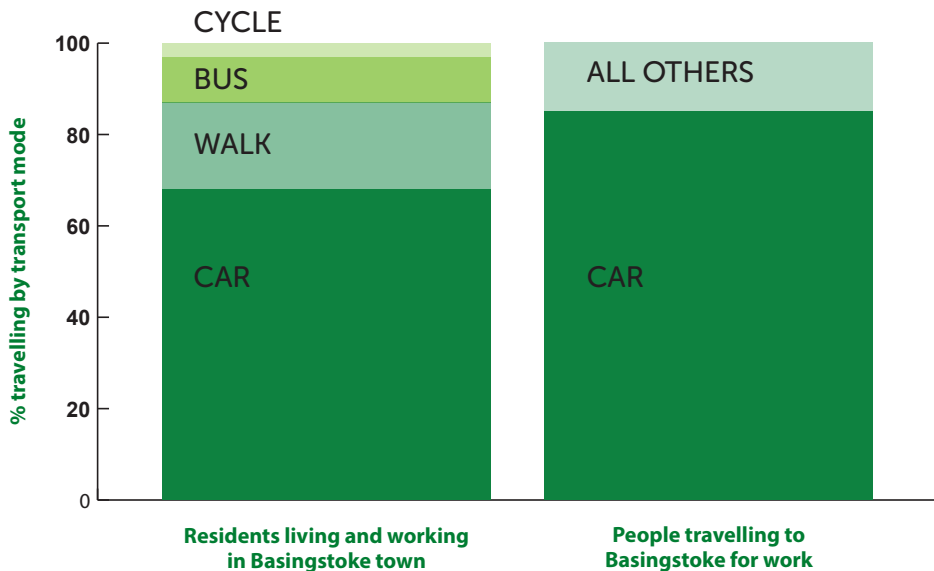
5(k) Should the Local Plan Update encourage or require large scale developments to connect to a district heat network where opportunities to do so have been identified?

5(l) Should the Local Plan Update include suitable criteria for assessing planning applications for battery storage and its associated infrastructure?

## 5.6 Transport and Movement

### 5.6.1

People need to be able to easily travel and reach key destinations if the borough is to continue to be a good place to live. Currently, most trips are made by car (see figures below), which reflects the ease of driving, limited alternatives to the car and poor facilities for cyclists. In the past, the general approach has mainly been focused on the car, with improvements to reduce congestion at key junctions. However, this may need to change, with more emphasis on public transport, cyclists and pedestrians in the future.



## 5.6.2

Traffic levels have increased in the borough and this is likely to continue, particularly with a larger population and future development. Current travel patterns create a large proportion of our carbon emissions, as well as leading to increased congestion.

## 5.6.3

Working with Hampshire County Council and transport operators, the council has developed a [Transport Strategy](#) to set out what type of future improvements are needed. This includes a network of high quality and direct public transport routes across Basingstoke, along with improvements for cyclists and pedestrians, and scope to accommodate for future changes in technology. Other strategic issues include considering the role of Park and Rides or new stations at Chineham and Oakley whilst ensuring the borough's existing railway stations are accessible with parking available. At a more local level, the role of car clubs should be considered as well as additional electric vehicle charging points.

## 5.6.4

To achieve this, land may need to be safeguarded for improved public transport or cycle routes. Consideration also needs to be given to new policies to support sustainable travel, particularly given the ambitious carbon reduction targets in the Climate Emergency declaration.

## 5.6.5

Outside of Basingstoke, it is recognised that travel options are more limited and that longer journeys are required to access some services. This increases reliance on the car for journeys to larger towns such as Basingstoke and Newbury, in addition to smaller service centres, and this needs to be considered when deciding where new homes should go. Consideration will also need to be given to the impact of HGVs on the highway network and how this is influenced by new employment development.



## Options for sustainable transport and movement

### Option 1:

Meeting the needs of the car by adding highway capacity and providing parking spaces to meet demand, with minor improvements to benefit cycling, walking and public transport.

### Option 2:

Focus on improvements in facilities for walking, cycling and public transport, including dedicating space on our roads for these forms of transport, including reserving land where required and considering the scope for new railway stations.

### Option 3:

Establish an approach that relies on managing demand, such as the pricing of car parking spaces, greater use of technology and more home-working to reduce the need to travel by car.

### Option 4:

An approach that sees an improvement to benefit all modes of transport.

## Section 5 – Questions:

5(m) Which option or options for sustainable transport and movement would you support?

5(n) Is there a role for Park and Ride at Basingstoke and where could such a facility be located?

5(o) Are there other forms of transport that will be important to plan for in the future?



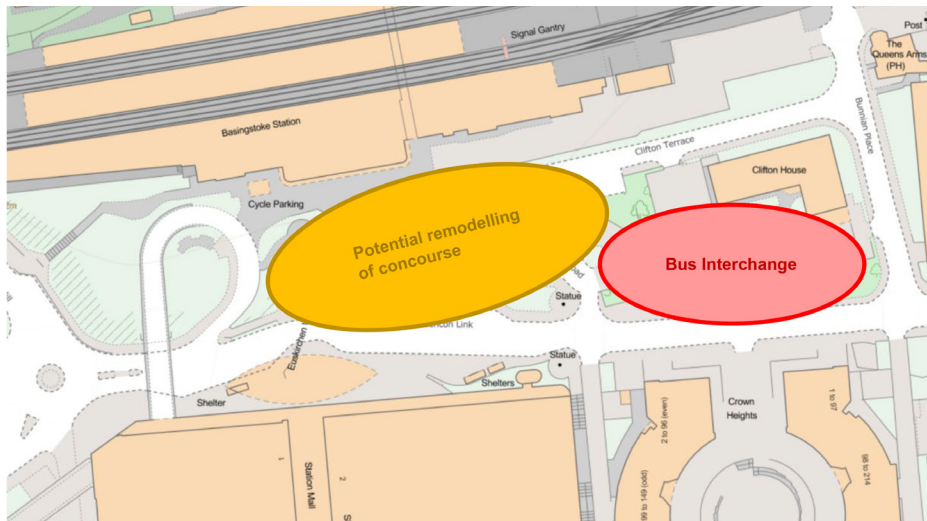
## 5.7 Creation of a Transport Hub

### 5.7.1

As outlined in the adopted Transport Strategy there is a focus on developing a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) in Basingstoke to provide a realistic alternative to car journeys within the town and provide a step change in the public transport experience. This would be based on the development of a network of high quality, rapid public transport corridors, connecting new and existing developments to Basingstoke town centre. In light of this, there is a recognised need to provide improved integration between different travel modes. At present, buses serve two main destinations in the town centre, the bus station and the railway station. There are benefits in combining the facilities in a redeveloped Station Approach area, providing opportunities to introduce new uses and a better experience for travellers with dedicated facilities in an improved environment. Combined with improvements in connectivity with Basing View and proposals to review how Eastrop roundabout operates, there is significant scope to change the way that this area functions and to improve linkages.

## 5.7.2

Careful consideration will need to be given to user requirements, such as the taxi ranks and drop-off areas, as well as the spaces needed for MRT vehicles to stop. This could evolve through master planning of the area which could also provide the opportunity to consider the need for and function of the existing bus station.



### Section 5 – Questions:

5(p) Do you support a review to facilitate a dedicated transport hub by Basingstoke railway station?

5(q) Are there any specific considerations that need to be taken into account as part of this review, including the suitability of other land uses?

## 6. Creating beautiful places and high quality living environments – a focus on place shaping

### 6.1 Design and quality across the borough

#### 6.1.1

The council is committed to providing well-designed, high quality living environments for residents which are both safe and healthy, and enable the creation of strong communities. It is also committed to improving the character and appearance of the borough wherever possible in order to create inspiring and uplifting places for people. It is therefore proposed that the Local Plan Update includes policies which raise the current standard of design being delivered throughout the borough and ensures that new development meets the health and safety needs of residents. Such an approach will build upon the current framework provided by neighbourhood plans which have been effective in delivering locally distinctive design policies. Horizon 2050 emphasises the need for distinctiveness, in particular creating a greater sense of uniqueness in terms of design and character.



### 6.1.2

Improving design standards is not only about aesthetics. It is vital for the urban environment to function effectively and be fully integrated with the natural environment, responding sympathetically to, and incorporating and supporting, natural features and eco-systems. This will be vital for improving the lives of borough residents, achieving sustainable development and also protecting and enhancing the environment and natural world. This approach will also need to be integrated with changes in transport infrastructure and behaviour in order to support sustainable travel choices, as this will have a significant impact on the quality of life and the environment within the borough's urban areas.

### 6.1.3

Design quality is also being emphasised more strongly at national level. The publication of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission's Living with Beauty report and the National Design Guide have clarified the government's priorities regarding design.

## 6.2 Design policy requirements

### 6.2.1

The standard of design across the borough varies and, while there are good examples, new developments have sometimes failed to deliver high quality and distinctive design, instead showing unimaginative architecture and using unattractive external finishing materials. New developments have also often delivered tight, hard layouts, which lack a sufficient consideration of the natural environment. The Local Plan Update should set a framework to secure a consistently higher standard of design, utilising garden city principles where appropriate, and delivering well considered architecture with a clearly expressed character, uplifting living environments and development with a strong emphasis on natural features.

### 6.2.2

Important elements that have been identified so far include:

- Setting out the need for more imaginative, bespoke architectural solutions in the borough, rather than the use of standard design approaches;
- Where traditional designs are used, ensuring these are more faithful to the architectural traditions they are drawn from in terms of design, detailing and materials;
- Requiring the use of external finishes and materials which will be robust, will weather attractively and are consistent with the overall design concept;
- Being development-specific in terms of design, for example, with policies focusing on how particular types of buildings (such as housing or flats) can be better designed and considering how individual buildings and spaces combine to create a well-designed street or place;



- Encouraging high quality architecture to deliver attractive buildings and streets through the effective consideration of proportion, scale and detailing;
- Reflecting the importance of greenery within developments including retaining mature trees, and creating and integrating attractive gardens, parks, tree lined streets, community orchards and woodlands and also green roofs and walls;
- Providing a variety of public spaces which are uplifting for people, support communities and provide natural features;
- Ensuring that natural features and open spaces are provided in a manner which facilitates their long-term survival and are practical to maintain and manage;
- Ensuring that open spaces are clearly defined, have a clear function and are integrated successfully into developments in order to maximise their visual and recreational benefits;
- Effective incorporation of parking provision into the design of new development;
- Ensuring that the design of buildings and streets supports sustainable design approaches and facilitates the use of technologies which will reduce carbon emissions such as electric cars;
- Considering how people move through developments and prioritise sustainable travel options and accessibility for all, for example through the introduction of specific requirements in terms of the design and integration of footpaths and cycle-ways, in order to ensure that these are as safe, effective and enjoyable to use as possible;
- Ensuring a high quality living environment addressing a range of issues such as natural light, privacy and space;
- Designing out crime;
- Reflecting emerging thinking as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and the suitability of future living environments; and
- Future proofing new development for all users.

### 6.2.3

The suitability of different housing densities in different areas will also need to be considered. Policies should enable the right balance to be struck between more urban types of development which achieve efficient layouts and greater vitality, and lower density developments providing more spacious layouts. It is recognised that higher density development is likely to be necessary in order to support more sustainable forms/patterns of development, however, where densities are raised it will be even more important to achieve a high standard of design and the incorporation of natural features, public open spaces and amenity provision for residents. If lower density schemes are utilised this will mean more land needs to be allocated to achieve the same amounts of development.

## 6.2.4

Another important issue is the need to improve the build quality of new developments. Whilst this falls outside the remit of the council's role as a planning authority, opportunities should be taken to address this issue, and the council is committed to doing all it can to address this matter.



### Section 6 – Questions:

6(a) Do you support the identified list of important elements relating to design and layout set out in paragraph 6.2.2?

6(b) Are there any other priorities or additional design related issues which the Local Plan Update should address?

6(c) Do you have any views on how these design priorities should be achieved?

6(d) Should the Local Plan Update be more visual and include examples of the type of designs supported?

6(e) Are more specific policies needed? For example, focusing on particular types of development (e.g. housing).

## 6.3 Location of specific design issues

### 6.3.1

Another issue to be considered through the Local Plan Update is whether there are certain design issues which need to be addressed in particular locations. Specific design policies could be introduced, or certain design requirements incorporated into other relevant policies, such as site allocation policies.

### 6.3.2

There are various areas where this may be relevant. Basingstoke town centre, for example, is an important area in terms of the impact it has on the character of the town for residents, visitors and workers. There may be particular design issues which could elevate the quality of the town centre. Examples include more dynamic and exciting architecture, reducing the extent of those routes lined by blank building frontages, improving the arrival experience into the town centre, better pedestrian and cycle routes, more greenery and more and high quality civic and amenity spaces.

### 6.3.3

As neighbourhood plans are able to provide location specific design policies this issue is likely to be of most relevance for Basingstoke town (which currently does not have any neighbourhood plans). However, the Local Plan Update could still provide overarching design policies for certain locations/areas which could then be given more detail through neighbourhood planning. For example, the Local Plan Update could provide a general design policy for development in rural areas with a view to ensuring that such development is sympathetic to the character of the local area.

#### Section 6 – Questions:

6(f) Are there any specific design priorities relevant to particular areas in the borough, for example Basingstoke town centre?



## 6.4 Space standards

### 6.4.1

The council is committed to ensuring that new housing meets the needs of residents and is suitable in terms of size and space. There is concern nationally that room sizes and storage space is not sufficient in many new developments. The current Local Plan does not include [Nationally Described Space Standards](#) (NDSS) and the council is looking to readdress this issue in the Local Plan Update. The NDSS are a national set of standards which set out requirements for the gross internal floor area of new homes and also for key parts of the home such as bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling heights. In order to ensure that the introduction of the NDSS are suitable for the borough, the council will need to gather evidence to determine the need for the standards and justify any policy approach considering implications on viability.

#### Section 6 – Questions:

6(g) Do you agree that the NDSS should be included as a policy requirement in the Local Plan Update? If not, why is this?

6(h) Do you have any views on the size of new homes which have been built in the borough in order to inform the evidence base relating to this issue?

6(i) Are there any other options that should also be considered, for example other homes standards such as a Home Quality Mark?



## 6.5 Safe and healthy communities

### 6.5.1

National policy requires that the Local Plan supports the creation of healthy and safe communities. This issue was also addressed in Horizon 2050 which emphasised that residents generally felt very safe and that health is an important issue. This is particularly pertinent in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

### 6.5.2

The current Local Plan policies seek to achieve this, for example by protecting community facilities and services, including those related to healthcare and open space and sports facilities, encouraging walking and cycling and also requiring the provision of sufficient open space and recreation facilities to encourage active lifestyles and engagement with the natural world.

### 6.5.3

The council will be as ambitious as possible to ensure that residents are safe and healthy, and feel that they are part of strong and inclusive communities. The council will also continue to work closely with local medical practices and the Clinical Commissioning Group in order to ensure that the Local Plan Update facilitates any expansion and/or improvements which are required with respect to medical services and/or premises.



#### Section 6 – Questions:

6(j) Is there any more that the Local Plan Update could do to support the creation of safe and healthy communities?



## 7. Developing a Spatial Strategy

### 7.1 What is a spatial strategy?

#### 7.1.1

The Local Plan is the council's key planning tool, setting out how the needs of existing and future communities will be accommodated, where future development should be located and when it will be delivered. This includes all types of development from community facilities to infrastructure, from new homes to places to work and play.

## 7.1.2

National planning policy and guidance sets out a number of statutory requirements that a Local Plan must cover. These include setting out strategic policies and site allocations which will meet the area's needs over the plan period, most notably in terms of housing, employment, retail and infrastructure.

## 7.1.3

In order to inform this process, the council has already started to put together a suitable evidence base to identify future needs. This includes a housing needs assessment, retail assessment, water cycle study (which will include a review of water resource management plans), strategic flood risk assessment, landscape capacity study, transport assessment and an economic needs study. The outcomes of studies completed to date are reflected in this consultation document. The evidence base will continue to develop over coming months.

## 7.2 Key elements of a spatial strategy for the borough

### 7.2.1

Some suggested key aspects of a sustainable spatial strategy for the borough are set out below. In many cases this will be a continuation of the current Local Plan's spatial strategy which is proving successful in addressing many of the issues already outlined:

- Optimising development on brownfield/urban sites;
- Allocating a mix of suitable and deliverable new housing sites in sustainable locations, which respect the pattern of settlements across the borough whilst meeting local needs;
- Protecting and regenerating the borough's key economic assets, including the borough's most important employment areas. In Basingstoke Town this includes the continued regeneration of Basing View and the leisure park;
- Ensuring an attractive and viable town centre in Basingstoke which is accessible and fit for purpose as the role of town centres continues to change, whilst preserving and enhancing its distinct character and individual heritage assets being environmentally responsible by developing a spatial strategy which protects and enhances the borough's environmental and heritage assets, including its green infrastructure network, landscape character, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and conservation areas. The setting of the borough's towns and villages should be protected;
- Avoiding impacts upon important biodiversity features and designated sites such as the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area, and ensuring there will be no adverse impact on nature conservation interests in the borough including priority habitats and ancient trees;
- Protecting the borough's water environment including water sources and the water quality of the borough's rivers and waterways, and protecting internationally protected sites such as the Solent by ensuring nutrient neutrality in any development falling within the River Test and Itchen catchment;

- Enhancing infrastructure provision, including transport and green infrastructure, to support sustainable development and the creation of new communities whilst minimising impact on existing residents; and
- Having due regard to constraints associated with the Atomic Weapons Establishments at Aldermaston and Burghfield which will impact upon development at Tadley.

#### Section 7 – Questions:

7(a) Do you agree with the key elements of the spatial strategy listed in paragraph 7.2.1?

7(b) Are there other considerations that need to be taken into account in developing the spatial strategy?



### 7.3 Meeting housing needs - how many new homes do we need?

#### 7.3.1

A key driver for change in the borough is the requirement to meet the area's housing needs. The Government has changed the way in which councils must plan for new housing. In the past, councils could determine their own local housing figure, following a number of prescribed steps, to ensure local needs were being met. However, housing figures are now established through a nationally set standard methodology based on population projections and affordability, with the aim of meeting the Government's objective of delivering 300,000 homes across the UK each year.

#### 7.3.2

It is currently unclear exactly how many new homes will need to be provided in the borough through the Local Plan Update. This is due to two issues. Firstly, the standard methodology is based upon population projections and affordability data which change each year – a local figure is only fixed once a Local Plan is submitted for examination. Secondly, the Government has expressed a commitment to updating the standard methodology to ensure that its national housebuilding target is met. Any new methodology may therefore result in the borough's housing requirement being changed. In light of this fluid picture, the Local Plan Update will need to be sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances.

#### 7.3.3

It is clear that new housing allocations will be required through the Local Plan Update, not least as a result of its longer timeframe than the current Local Plan. The current Local Plan already includes a high annual housing requirement of 850 new homes a year. This is a higher requirement than neighbouring areas in Hampshire and Berkshire. In line with Government guidance, the 850 figure will be considered out of date in May 2021 (five years after adoption in May 2016) and the

borough's housing requirement will be set on the basis of the standard methodology from this date onwards. If the standard methodology was applied now, the Local Plan Update's annual housing requirement would be increased to 884 new homes a year. This figure may increase further in the future, potentially significantly, as outlined above.

### 7.3.4

Over the nine years since the start of the current Local Plan period in 2011, 6,579 homes have been delivered. A number of housing sites allocated in the current Local Plan and made neighbourhood plans have not yet been developed and are either still in the planning process or are being build out. This includes more than 5,000 new homes to the west and south west of Basingstoke at Manydown, Hounsome Fields and Basingstoke Golf Course. There is also notable development due to be delivered through Neighbourhood Plans at Whitchurch, Overton, Oakley, Bramley and Kingsclere in coming years. These developments will deliver homes over coming years and contribute towards the borough's new housing requirement.

### 7.3.5

As a starting point, and taking these existing allocations into account, the need for 884 new homes a year up to 2038 would lead to a requirement of around 6,000 to 7,000 more new homes. The Local Plan Update will need to allocate new sites for these homes.

## 7.4 Where should development go?

### 7.4.1

A call for sites consultation took place in 2019. The council (as Local Planning Authority) received information on a large number of sites which were considered, by landowners, developers or planning agents, to have potential to accommodate future development. A number of



sites have also been promoted to the council since the consultation was completed, as sites can be put forward at any time through the Local Plan Update process. More land has been promoted than will be required to meet future needs and requirements, and therefore the council has a choice regarding which areas of land are considered the most suitable to accommodate future development.

### 7.4.2

Details of promoted sites can be seen in the council's [Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHELAA). In order to assist with the consultation process, a separate promoted sites document has also been produced. The council will complete a detailed site assessment process to consider the suitability of sites for development. At this stage, the council, as Local Planning Authority, is not in the position to support any specific sites for future allocation.

### Brownfield Development

### 7.4.3

In line with national guidance and local priorities identified in Horizon 2050, the starting point for identifying locations for new development is to look at the built up area of the borough, particularly brownfield sites/ previously developed land. As is the case with the current Local Plan, the Local Plan Update should include policies to optimise brownfield development. This could include redeveloping existing land currently in other uses, such as employment (including offices and factories) or retail (shops), for new homes. The council's SHELAA, which is essentially a register of sites that have been promoted to the council for future development, identifies a number of brownfield sites which could be redeveloped for housing.

### 7.4.4

National guidance suggests that in order to optimise the use of land, consideration should be given to the introduction of standards to increase the density of development, particularly for town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. The council will therefore need to consider the suitability of introducing new policies to promote higher density development, for example in suitable locations such as in town centres (shopping centres), or along transport corridors such as the A30. This could involve the introduction of taller buildings in suitable locations, such as parts of Basingstoke town centre.



## Section 7 – Questions:

7(c) Should land in employment and retail use be considered for new homes where it is vacant or underused? If yes, which locations should be considered?

7(d) Should more new homes be delivered in Basingstoke town centre? If yes, via what sort of developments (e.g. new blocks of flats, adding additional storeys to existing buildings) and in what locations?

7(e) Would you support the principle of high density development in suitable locations in the borough? If yes, in what locations?

7(f) Would you support the inclusion of additional tall buildings (over six storeys) in Basingstoke? If yes, what locations would be most suitable?

7(g) Would you support the introduction of minimum density standards to uplift the density of residential developments? Please explain your answer.

### Greenfield development

#### 7.4.5

Given the level of growth needed, even with development on brownfield sites being maximised, new greenfield sites will be required. These will be primarily housing-led, but for larger sites could be mixed use, incorporating other uses such as employment. The lack of brownfield sites reflects the characteristics of the borough's towns and villages, including the nature of Basingstoke as a 1960s expanded town, its lack of industrial heritage and the historic nature of the borough's settlements.

#### 7.4.6

The current Local Plan sets out a spatial strategy which focuses housing led development on greenfield extensions around the main urban area of Basingstoke, supporting its role as a regional hub and centre for investment and economic growth. It is the most sustainable location for growth in the borough, offering a wide range of facilities, services and infrastructure. The current Local Plan also directs some growth to the borough's other larger towns and villages to meet local needs and to ensure that the vitality of these settlements is maintained. Levels of planned growth take into account local infrastructure capacity and other constraints. Development in the borough's rural areas has, in a number of areas, been guided by made neighbourhood plans which ensure that local communities have a real say in where development in their area takes place.

## 7.4.7

There are a number of options regarding where development could go in the future and these are summarised below. Key issues to consider include how sustainable and deliverable the approach is, and whether it meets the needs of different areas. Whilst these options primarily relate to greenfield development, some brownfield land may also be included in the options. The development of a new settlement or village may be acceptable where it can provide access to infrastructure to serve the new community and also sustainable choices of travel, for example through access to public transport.

### Options for locating development on greenfield sites

#### Option 1:

Continue the current Local Plan approach (focus future development at Basingstoke with some greenfield development at larger towns and villages, including Overton, Whitchurch, Bramley, Kingsclere and Oakley and more limited development in small settlements with SPBs)..

#### Option 2:

Focus all future development at Basingstoke

#### Option 3:

Continue the Local Plan approach but increase the proportion of future development at the borough's larger and more sustainable towns and villages (category 2 and 3 in para. 7.5.3).

#### Option 4:

Continue the Local Plan approach but increase the proportion of development taking place in and around the borough's smaller and more rural settlements (category 4 and 5 in paragraph 7.5.3)

#### Option 5:

Create a new settlement/s or village/s.

### Section 7 – Questions:

7(h) Which option or combination of options would you support for greenfield development? Please explain your answer.

7(i) Are there any other options that should be considered?



## 7.5 Where should development take place in rural areas?

### 7.5.1

Basingstoke and Deane is a predominantly rural borough. Whilst it is important to continue to protect and enhance the character of the borough and its settlements, it is also essential to sustain communities and the vitality of smaller towns and villages. New development can help support the viability of existing facilities and services in rural settlements.

## 7.5.2

The council has undertaken initial work ([Settlement Study Part 1](#)) to consider the relative sustainability of the borough's settlements. This takes account of such issues as size, range of local services and facilities, accessibility to larger settlements and their facilities by sustainable transport and employment opportunities. This assessment has enabled settlements to be placed in a sustainability category, as summarised in the following table. The relative sustainability of the listed settlements will be taken into account alongside local needs, opportunities and constraints in determining future suitable levels of growth for each settlement. This will be considered in Part 2 of the Settlement Study. A number of smaller villages and hamlets are not included in any of the categories due to their smaller populations and more limited amenities.

Category	Settlement
1. Principal Service Centre	Basingstoke Town
2. Large Local Service Centre	Overton, Tadley, Whitchurch
3. Small Local Service Centre	Bramley, Kingsclere, Oakley and Old Basing
4. Large Villages	North Waltham, Sherborne St John, Sherfield on Loddon, Woolton Hill
5. Small Villages	Ashford Hill, Bishops Green, Burghclere, Cliddesden, Dummer, Ecchinswell, Headley, Highclere, Preston Candover, Silchester, St Mary Bourne, Upton Grey

## 7.5.3

Five of the Small Villages listed above do not currently have a defined Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) namely Bishops Green, Ecchinswell, Hannington, Headley, Highclere and Silchester. SPBs are boundaries surrounding a settlement which separate the main-built up area from open countryside. Within a SPB the principle of new development is generally supported subject to other relevant policies, such as the protection of open space. In light of the above categorisation, the Local Plan Update will need to consider if SPBs should be included around these additional settlements to bring them in line with other settlements included in the sustainability categories. This will be considered further when determining suitable levels of growth for the categorised settlements within Part 2 of the Settlement Study.



## 7.5.4

As the borough's second largest settlement, Tadley is categorised in the table above as a Large Local Service Centre, reflecting both its size and provision of services and facilities. Only very limited growth has taken place in and around the town over recent decades in light of its close proximity to the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston, a nuclear installation. The current Local Plan includes a policy which only allows development where the Off Site Nuclear Emergency Plan can accommodate the needs of the population in the event of an emergency. This approach is being revisited through the Local Plan Update and the council is working with relevant stakeholders to ensure that any future approaches continue to balance safeguarding the population whilst meeting the town's needs into the future.

### Section 7 – Questions:

7(j) Do you support the approach of grouping settlements by size, role and provision of services and facilities to inform decision-making for where future development should be located?

7(k) Do you support the proposed categories and the settlements identified in the table above?

7(l) Do you have any views on the introduction of new SPBs for the five settlements (Bishops Green, Ecchinswell, Headley, Highclere and Silchester) which do not currently have SPBs?

7(m) Do you have any views on the suitability of future growth at Tadley, given its unique circumstances?

## 7.6 How much development should take place within rural areas?

### 7.6.1

When determining how much growth is appropriate in the borough's settlements outside Basingstoke Town, it will be necessary to take account of the overall spatial strategy and the sustainability of each settlement (as set out in the table above). However, it will also be important to consider each settlement's specific circumstances and characteristics including:

- Market and affordable housing needs;
- Amount of recent or planned development (including how they relate to targets in the current Local Plan);
- Infrastructure capacity including highway constraints and access to GPs and schools;
- Impact on environmental and heritage assets; and
- The availability of suitable sites.

### Section 7 – Questions:

7(n) Do you agree that the factors listed above should be considered when determining suitable levels of growth in settlements?

7(o) Are there any other factors that should be considered, and why?

## 7.7 Ensuring deliverability

### 7.7.1

The council will need to ensure that the Local Plan Update's housing strategy is deliverable and that a five year supply of homes is retained throughout the Plan period. If sufficient deliverable sites cannot be demonstrated, relevant parts of the Local Plan will be considered out of date and the borough will have less control over where development is located, and therefore be more vulnerable to speculative developments. In order to avoid this situation, it is important to allocate sites of differing types and sizes. Whilst large sites deliver more homes and create opportunities for new infrastructure provision, they often take longer to develop. Over reliance on a small number of large sites can have a significant impact on land supply if the delivery of one or more of them is delayed. Conversely, smaller sites have less impact on local communities and the environment and are often quicker to come forward. However, they can put pressure on local infrastructure and facilities as often no new facilities are provided. National policy requires that at least 10% of the homes allocated in the Plan are on small sites (sites of less than 1 ha).

### 7.7.2

Whilst allocated housing sites are expected to come forward in line with agreed timescales, some sites do not come forward as planned for a variety of reasons. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to whether the Local Plan Update should allocate reserve sites to increase robustness and flexibility. Such sites could be released if others fail to come forward as expected.



### 7.7.3

The Local Plan Update could also highlight broader areas for longer term growth and it is recognised that some of the growth options around Basingstoke are so large that their delivery may go beyond the new plan period. This could provide more clarity for the longer term and enable wider master planning to take place which would consider, and therefore help to secure, comprehensive infrastructure provision. It would also enable work to progress on such areas earlier, recognising the long lead in times associated with larger sites. Such an approach would, however, limit the Plan's ability to flex to changing circumstances and requirements, whilst also potentially requiring decisions to be made on less detailed evidence.

#### Options for deliverability of new sites

##### Option 1:

Focus growth in a small number of large development sites accommodating over 1,000 new homes.

##### Option 2:

Focus growth on a larger number of smaller development sites.

##### Option 3:

Spread the development across a range of different sized sites including both sites over 1,000 new homes and smaller sites.

##### Option 4:

Include reserve sites within the Local Plan Update in order to improve flexibility.

##### Option 5:

Include locations for future development in order to provide clarity regarding the locations of future large scale allocations.

#### Section 7 – Questions:

7(p) Which option or options would you support?

7(q) Are there any other options which should be considered?



## 7.8 The role of neighbourhood planning

### 7.8.1

The council strongly supports the role of neighbourhood planning. Neighbourhood plans provide power to communities to influence planning decisions in their area. They act as vehicles for communities to allocate land for development and establish general planning policies to shape development within the neighbourhood area.

## 7.8.2

Neighbourhood planning has been both popular and successful throughout the borough, with 10 adopted neighbourhood plans and seven additional areas designated as having a neighbourhood area.

## 7.8.3

The Local Plan Update will need to establish a framework for the delivery of the housing targets that it identifies. The current Local Plan sets out housing requirements for the rural areas to be met through neighbourhood planning. The high uptake of neighbourhood planning indicates that this approach has been successful and has given local residents the ability to influence and guide development in their local areas. However, it is recognised that communities may have different views and expectations for producing new or updated neighbourhood plans, particularly in relation to housing delivery.

## 7.8.4

The council is therefore considering the future role of neighbourhood planning in relation to housing delivery and a number of options are outlined below.

### Options for neighbourhood planning

#### Option 1:

Continue with the current Local Plan approach (Policy SS5) of providing the framework for local communities to deliver their housing requirements through Neighbourhood Planning.

#### Option 2:

Allocate all housing-led sites through the Local Plan Update.

#### Option 3:

Use a more flexible approach depending on the aspirations of a particular community, with the Local Plan Update allocating sites where there is no appetite to address housing delivery through neighbourhood planning.

### Section 7 – Questions:

7(r) Which option or options would you support?

7(s) Are there any other options which should be considered?

7(t) Do you have any other comments about how the current approach to neighbourhood planning (in Local Plan Policy SS5) has worked?

We would particularly welcome the views of town and parish councils on how neighbourhood planning has worked in your area and the appetite to use neighbourhood planning to identify locations for growth in the future.



## 7.9 New homes in the countryside

### 7.9.1

By directing new development to within existing towns and villages, the council is able to help protect the character and beauty of the borough's countryside, prevent the joining of existing settlements, and stop development spreading into open countryside.

### 7.9.2

However, some flexibility is needed to enable new homes to be built where there are local needs and the vitality of rural communities will be enhanced. The current Local Plan therefore sets a generally restrictive approach to new homes in the countryside, but provides some flexibility to permit development in the following circumstances:

- On previously developed land/brownfield sites;
- Rural exception sites for affordable housing;
- For the re-use of a redundant or disused building;
- Replacement dwellings;
- Where there is a 'locally agreed need';
- Linked to an agricultural enterprise; and
- On sites allocated in a neighbourhood plan.

### 7.9.3

The current Local Plan policy has provided a strong but flexible framework that has delivered a notable number of new dwellings in rural areas but only where the circumstances were appropriate. The approach still reflects national policy and it is considered that the policy will remain in the Local Plan Update. Minor updates may be required to reflect changes to ensure the policy remains up to date.

## 8. Maintaining a growing and diverse economy

### 8.1 Economic opportunities

#### 8.1.1

Horizon 2050 sets out the goal of ensuring that the borough maintains a growing and diverse economy where residents can build successful careers in a range of jobs and where shopping centres remain successful and attractive. It also emphasises the importance of regenerating business areas, providing high-quality accommodation, enabling new and small businesses to grow and encouraging larger businesses to relocate here. Support services will strengthen innovation and the borough's reputation for high tech industry will be expanded.

#### 8.1.2

The Local Plan Update is an opportunity to ensure that there is a positive planning framework for supporting the borough's economy and local businesses. This will have due regard to the Local Industrial Strategy currently being prepared by Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership. Key to underpinning this process will be ensuring that the Local Plan Update reflects the needs of the local economy.

#### 8.1.3

An Economic Needs Assessment (ENA) for the borough was completed in 2018, which, alongside regional studies completed by the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, identified the following key characteristics of the borough's economy from a planning perspective:

- The borough has a generally healthy, balanced economy, based on a wide range of different sectors and types of business rather than being reliant on a small number of businesses or sectors;
- It is a relatively self-contained economy;
- There is a relatively strong office sector, benefitting from the growth of certain sectors such as digital. However, there is strong competition from neighbouring locations such as Reading, and there is a significant amount of poor quality floorspace. There is a need for more high quality office space;
- There is a stable industrial sector, with strengths in advanced manufacturing. This sector has the capacity to grow, although this is hampered by ageing accommodation; and
- The borough has characteristics which make it attractive for supporting additional storage and distribution floorspace, and there is a need for such floorspace.

## 8.1.4

Notwithstanding the above, the ENA predates the COVID-19 crisis and the potential economic impact this will have both nationally and locally. Currently, it is too soon to say with confidence what the economic impacts will be, but the crisis is likely to affect land use needs over the plan period. A new Economic Needs Assessment will be undertaken to reflect on such issues and also consider likely trends over the longer Local Plan period.

## 8.2 Employment areas

### 8.2.1

The current Local Plan designates a number of Strategic Employment Areas where employment uses such as offices and industrial buildings are generally protected. Refurbishment opportunities are supported in principle where needed. In order to support the economy and local businesses it is unlikely to be acceptable to lose employment floorspace unless it can be shown that such employment areas are no longer fit for purpose.

### 8.2.2

Some of the employment areas, however, may no longer be fit for purpose and could potentially be put to better use through other development such as residential. Floorspace could be re-provided on new employment sites allocated in the Local Plan Update. This could ensure the best use of land and may be a way of providing new, higher quality floorspace. Consideration should also be given to whether parts of employment areas, which are no longer attractive to the market, could be redeveloped for other uses, with the rest of such areas being retained for employment uses.

#### Options for Employment Areas

**Option 1:**

Retain all of the current strategic employment areas.

**Option 2:**

Re-allocate one or more of the existing employment areas for other uses.

**Option 3:**

Re-allocate parts of existing employment areas for other uses



## Section 8 – Questions:

8(a) Which option or options would you support for strategic employment areas?

8(b) If you support Option 2 and/or 3, which areas do you consider are the most suitable for reuse? What other uses would be most appropriate?

8(c) Are there any other options that should be considered for growth in the future?

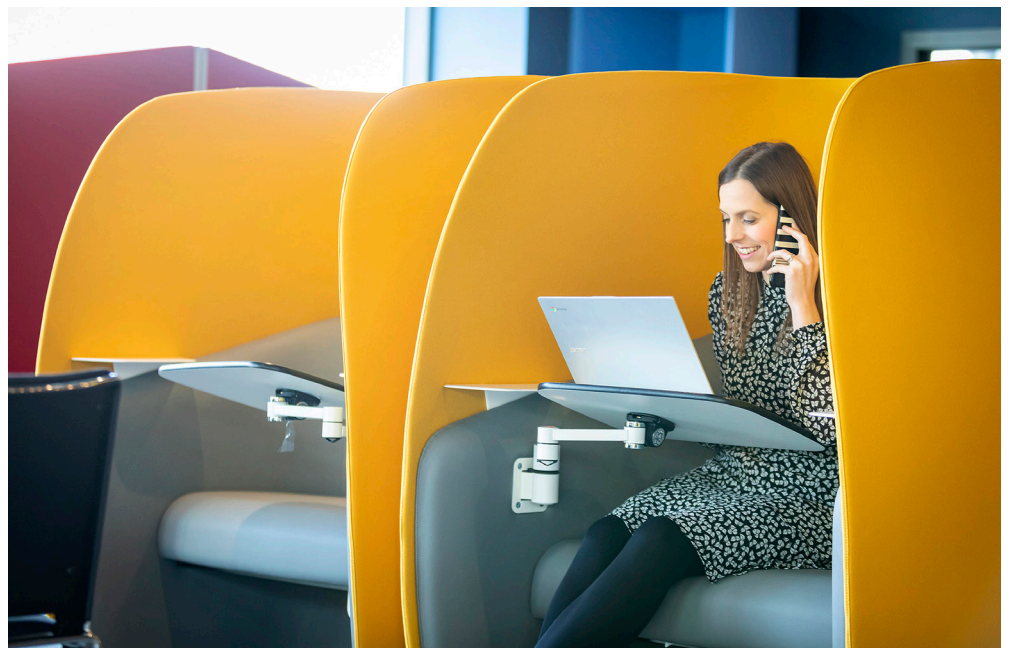
## 8.3 Office uses

### 8.3.1

The borough has some good office accommodation, particularly on Basing View and in Chineham Business Park, and the construction of new office buildings and the planned/implemented refurbishment of existing buildings on Basing View is a positive development for the town.

### 8.3.2

The borough has seen the conversion of a considerable amount of office accommodation to residential use via the government's permitted development rights. This has usually involved the loss of poorer quality floorspace and consequently has not unduly harmed the overall local economy. However, it is important to retain our most important office stock and the council introduced an Article 4 Direction in 2019 to remove the permitted development rights in three of the Strategic Employment Areas, including Basing View.



### 8.3.3

The 2018 Economic Needs Assessment (ENA) identified a potential need for additional A grade or high quality office accommodation up to 2029. The current Local Plan sets out a strategy for accommodating new office floorspace, largely focusing on existing office areas, particularly Basing View which has considerable capacity for new and refurbished floorspace, sufficient to meet these floorspace needs.

### 8.3.4

Over the time period of the Local Plan Update (at least 2038) there may be a need for additional office floorspace, which could require the allocation of new employment areas in Basingstoke and elsewhere. Although current forecasts suggest this may not be the case, this will need further consideration through the new ENA, taking into account the potential impacts of the COVID-19 crisis which could significantly reduce the demand for office floorspace (e.g. owing to greater homeworking) and hinder speculative development, make funding for development more difficult to secure and accelerate the trend towards homeworking, meaning that demand for office space will be reduced.

### 8.3.5

Any strategy for the delivery of new office space would need to consider the relative sustainability of different locations, viability issues and constraints. For example, new office space could be better provided as part of new housing allocations on the outskirts of the town. This would allow for these developments to be mixed use areas, helping their vitality and sustainability by providing local job opportunities.

### 8.3.6

The Local Plan Update could also support new office development in Basingstoke town centre, replacing current retail provision and providing opportunities for smaller office spaces that would contribute towards the vitality of the town centre by increasing footfall. The future role of the town centre will be considered through the development of a Town Centre Masterplan.

## Options for developing the borough's office sector

### Option 1:

Continue to focus new office development in existing office areas such as Basing View and Chineham.

### Option 2:

Deliver new office development in new employment areas on the edge of Basingstoke.

### Option 3:

Deliver new office development on housing allocations on the edge of Basingstoke in order to create mixed use developments.

### Option 4:

Support office development within the town centre.

### Option 5:

Provide more protection for existing offices.

## Section 8 – Questions:

8(d) Which option or options would you support for developing the borough's office sector and why?

8(e) If you think a combination of the above options is most suitable, please indicate which options you favour and why?

8(f) Are there any other options that should be considered?



## 8.4 Industrial uses

### 8.4.1

The borough has a considerable amount of industrial accommodation, most of which is occupied. In terms of market requirements there is currently a shortage of relevant accommodation. The current Local Plan sets out a strategy for accommodating new provision on existing employment areas. However, much of the borough's industrial stock is ageing, meaning there is a lack of choice.

### 8.4.2

Current economic projections indicate a lower level of demand for industrial floorspace moving forward. Consequently, the demand for industrial floorspace may well be lower than that set out in the 2018 ENA.

### 8.4.3

If additional industrial floorspace is required over the longer time period of the Local Plan Update, the option of absorbing this in existing employment areas may not be practical, as the space is not available and there is little scope for using industrial land more efficiently. However, it is considered that the focus should still be on redeveloping existing areas in the first instance as much as possible.

### 8.4.4

In addition, new employment areas could be developed on the edge of Basingstoke Town, or elsewhere, if suitable opportunities are available, especially if located in close proximity to the strategic road network (primarily the M3). This would allow for the provision of new floorspace, but viability will need to be considered, particularly if any significant infrastructure is required.

### 8.4.5

There may also be scope to incorporate some industrial floorspace in new housing allocations on the edge of Basingstoke Town, provided the type of floorspace, and location is compatible with housing. Indeed, this may allow for some efficiencies in the use of land, for example by putting industrial uses in parts of sites which may not be suitable for housing.

### 8.4.6

A further option would be to provide a flexible approach which allows the market to drive the provision of new floorspace subject to certain conditions being met.

#### Options for developing the borough's industrial sector, if required

**Option 1:**

Focus any new industrial floorspace on existing employment areas as much as possible.

**Option 2:**

Focus new industrial development on new employment areas provided on the edge of Basingstoke Town or elsewhere.

**Option 3:**

Provide new industrial floorspace within new housing allocations, provided it does not have a detrimental impact on new dwellings.

**Option 4:**

Do not allocate any more industrial land, but instead rely on a policy which allows development to come forward when and where it is needed.



## Section 8 – Questions:

8(g) Which option or options would you support for developing the borough's industrial sector?

8(h) Are there any other options that should be considered?

## 8.5 Storage and distribution uses

### 8.5.1

This sector has been growing in recent years, primarily due to the growth in online shopping. The current Local Plan identifies a significant need for additional storage and distribution floorspace up to 2029, both to serve the local market and provide larger scale premises for the regional/sub-regional market. Current economic forecasts show that this sector remains strong and the growth of on-line shopping could exacerbate demand.

### 8.5.2

Basingstoke is seen by the logistics sector as particularly suitable for storage and distribution owing to its proximity to the M3. If sufficient storage and distribution floorspace is not provided, in addition to the impact on local jobs in this sector, this could also result in existing industrial businesses being displaced as the two uses are attracted to the same premises and land. This could lead to a loss of jobs as storage and distribution businesses often employ less people than industrial enterprises.

### 8.5.3

New floorspace is therefore likely to be needed, in locations well-connected to the strategic road network. This could be provided via a new employment area, for example, on the edge of Basingstoke, which could also potentially provide new industrial floorspace, and also office space. However, any development on the edge of Basingstoke would need to recognise the importance of such areas as 'gateways' to the town. This would need to be reflected in the way in which any such sites are developed and means that a high standard of design and site planning would be required. There may also be scope to incorporate some storage and distribution floorspace into housing allocations. However, this is only likely to be appropriate for small-scale low-key premises.

## 8.5.4

The council could also retain the current approach in relation to storage and distribution, adopting a policy which allows sites to come forward where there is a demonstrable need and subject to meeting certain requirements. This approach may not be suitable as the only means of providing the required space, given the significant identified demand for this land use.

### Options for developing the borough's storage and distribution sector, if required

#### Option 1:

Focus new storage and distribution development on new employment areas provided on the edge of Basingstoke or elsewhere.

#### Option 2:

Provide new storage and distribution floorspace as part of new housing allocations provided this does not have a detrimental impact on new dwellings.

#### Option 3:

Rely on a policy which allows such development to come forward when and where it is needed.

### Section 8 – Questions:

8(i) Which option or options would you support for developing the borough's storage and distribution sector?

8(j) Are there any other options that should be considered?



### Future proofing the borough's economy

## 8.5.5

A considerable amount of economic change is likely to occur over the Local Plan period, particularly in light of such impacts as COVID-19 and Brexit. Technological advances and changes in working patterns and trends are also likely, such as the growth in automation and artificial intelligence or increased home working. The Local Plan Update needs to be sufficiently flexible to respond to such economic and technological changes.

## 8.5.6

For existing employment areas, policy provisions supporting redevelopment/refurbishment are likely to be sufficient for addressing this issue. However, a new policy may be required to enable additional sites to come forward to meet new economic requirements which have not currently been identified. The council is keen to hear from residents, businesses and relevant stakeholders concerning whether there are other measures which could be incorporated into the Local Plan Update in order to support the future development of the economy and ensure suitable flexibility.

### Section 8 – Questions:

8(k) Should the Local Plan Update include a policy which enables economic development proposals to come forward to address needs not currently identified?

8(l) Is there anything more that the Local Plan Update can do to help future proof the borough's economy, for example in relation to increased home working?

## 8.6 The future of Basing View

### 8.6.1

The Basing View employment area is a key asset for the borough and its ongoing regeneration is of vital importance to the commercial future of the town and borough. It lies in the heart of Basingstoke, next to the railway station and the town centre. The council, as landowner, has achieved notable successes in securing new high quality office space in the area over recent years, alongside complementary uses including a new hotel. The area was designated as an Enterprise Zone in 2017 and has benefitted from landscaping and infrastructure improvements.

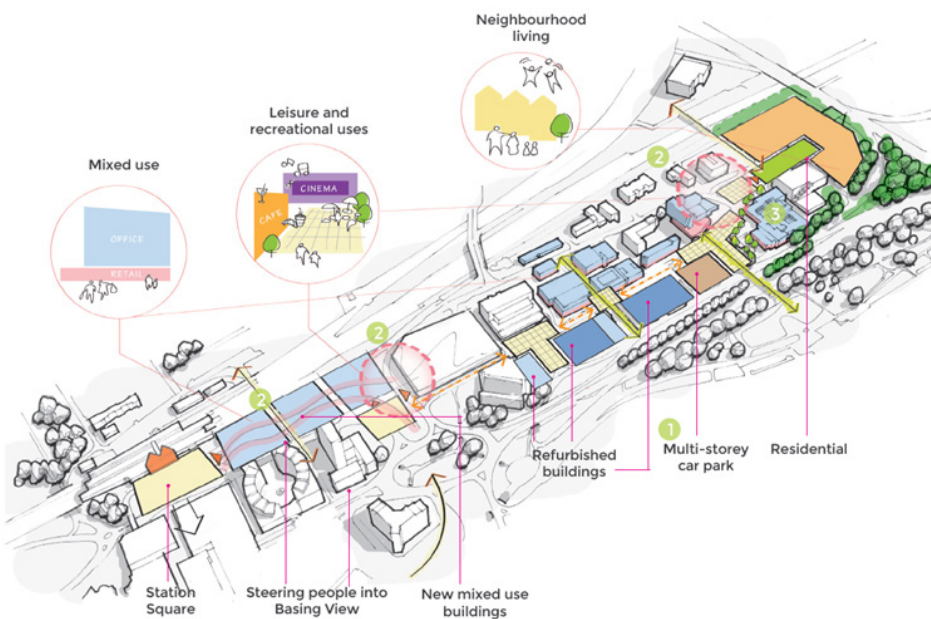
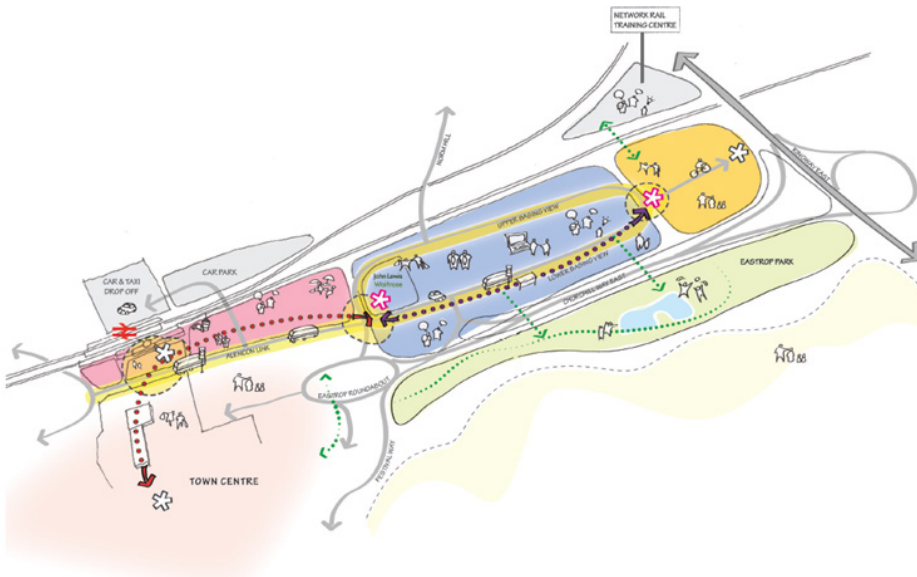


## 8.6.2

However, further regeneration is needed. The current Local Plan policy seeks to ensure that the area remains primarily a high quality business park (focusing on office accommodation), but supports some complementary uses in order to ensure its economic viability and vibrancy, including the delivery of around 300 new homes. This approach was based on the masterplan for Basing View which was in place at the time the current Plan was adopted.

## 8.6.3

A new Basing View masterplan was adopted by the borough council in 2018 and, while it has no planning status, it sets out an ambitious vision for the future the area, including improving connections with the station.



## 8.6.4

The Local Plan Update provides the opportunity to reflect the new masterplan in the planning framework for the area. The current high level approach could be retained to ensure that the overall principles of the 2018 masterplan are delivered, whilst flexibility to respond to the market and changing demands is maintained. It is recognised that the economy will need to change and adapt post Covid-19 and a flexible approach could ensure that key principles are maintained whilst markets adjust. Alternatively, a more detailed and finer grained approach could be taken, setting out future uses of individual plots and buildings. This would provide more certainty in terms of how the area develops and enable the council to consider the future of individual buildings within the context of a more detailed framework. However, this will reduce the ability to respond to change.

## 8.6.5

A further, and perhaps more fundamental, change in approach would be to open the area up to non-office uses, such as more residential development. The policy could also be expanded to include surrounding land which is key to the delivery of a number of schemes set out in the adopted Transport Strategy. This includes the delivery of a transport hub at the railway station to provide an improved interchange at Station Approach for rail and bus travel, and the delivery of a Mass Rapid Transit system which would deliver high quality and frequent public transport services across Basingstoke.

### Options for Basing View

#### Option 1:

Update the current policy to set out high level general principles based on the Basing View masterplan (2018).

#### Option 2:

Introduce a detailed policy approach which sets out suitable uses for individual plots and buildings, based on the new masterplan for the site.

#### Option 3:

Introduce a more flexible policy which supports uses other than offices, such as retail and residential.

### Section 8 – Questions:

8(m) Which option would you support for Basing View? Please explain your answer.

8(n) Are there any other options that should be considered?



## 8.7 Rural economy

### 8.7.1

As a borough with a large rural area, the rural economy is important and needs to be supported. Current evidence suggests that the rural economy is stable and operating effectively.

### 8.7.2

The current Local Plan provides support for the rural economy, seeking to facilitate the sustainable expansion of existing businesses and the development of smaller-scale businesses, while balancing this against the need for development to be sustainable and not put undue pressure on local communities and infrastructure.

### 8.7.3

The Local Plan Update could provide more support, facilitating economic expansion in rural areas. However, this could result in some greater impacts on rural areas such as increased traffic. Also, the Local Plan Update could provide protection for existing rural floorspace. Alternatively there may be certain sectors of the rural economy which need a more bespoke approach in order to provide specific support.

#### Options for the rural economy

##### Option 1:

Continue the current approach in relation to the rural economy, focusing on supporting existing businesses and small scale new businesses.

##### Option 2:

Adopt a more expansive approach, providing more support for rural businesses, the expansion of existing employment sites and the creation of new business premises in the countryside.

##### Option 3:

Broaden the scope to include protection for existing rural economy floorspace (i.e. to prevent it going over to other uses unless this can be suitably justified).

##### Option 3:

Provide a policy framework which addresses certain parts of the rural economy which need more specific support.

#### Section 8 – Questions:

8(o) Which option would you support for the rural economy? Please explain your answer.

8(p) Are there any other options that should be considered?



## 8.8 Tourism

### 8.8.1

The borough has a number of significant attractions for visitors. Basingstoke itself contains a significant retail offer along with bars and restaurants, and entertainment venues such as The Anvil whilst the Leisure Park offers ice skating, bowling, a swimming complex and cinema, along with the Milestones Museum. There are also significant tourist attractions elsewhere in the borough such as the Whitchurch Silk Mill and the Bombay Sapphire Distillery, Stratfield Saye House, The Vyne, Basing House and Highclere Castle. The borough's Roman and Iron Age heritage can be seen at Calleva Atrebatum and Roman Silchester, with its well-preserved defensive walls.

### 8.8.2

Currently, the policy framework provides some support for the provision of tourist-related development. However, the Local Plan Update could provide more support to tourist-related development including accommodation for visitors.



#### Options for tourism

##### Option 1:

Retain the current policy framework which provides some support.

##### Option 2:

Take a more supportive approach to new tourist development.

#### Section 8 – Questions:

8(q) Which option would you support for tourism?

8(r) If a more proactive approach is taken to tourism, should this be limited to certain locations and types of tourist accommodation?

8(s) Are there any other options that should be considered?



## 8.9 Town and local centres

### 8.9.1

High streets and town centres play an important role in meeting retail needs but also in being destinations for leisure and recreation, as well as places to live and work. However, our centres are now facing major challenges as a result of changes in how we shop and spend our leisure time, including increased competition from the internet. The Local Plan should provide a positive strategy for the future role of the borough's centres, including Basingstoke town centre, to ensure they have vitality and are viable into the future.

### 8.9.2

A retail study is being completed to understand how our needs are likely to change over the plan period. Although such forecasts are uncertain, initial indications suggest that there will be no requirement for additional retail floorspace over the Plan period, and only limited potential for additional leisure uses including space for eating and drinking out.

### 8.9.3

It is therefore likely that the Local Plan Update will not need to plan for existing centres to expand, but instead should provide a flexible framework to allow them to be resilient and adapt to changing requirements.

### 8.9.4

The current Local Plan identifies the following hierarchy of retail centres across the borough, reflecting their roles and functions:

- Town Centre: Basingstoke
- District Centres: Brighton Hill, Chineham, Overton, Tadley and Whitchurch
- Local Centres: Kingsclere

### 8.9.5

National policy states that Local Plans should support a 'town centre first approach', directing main town centre uses (such as shops and restaurants) to designated centres. This element of the existing Local Plan policy should therefore remain unchanged in the Local Plan Update.

### 8.9.6

The council will review the retail hierarchy, and consider whether any new centres should be designated, taking into account the shopping patterns shown by the retail study. Initial findings indicate that the current hierarchy is still appropriate as those centres are still the most used in the borough. The council could, however, also consider allocating centres on the new development sites such as at Manydown. The council will review the boundaries of existing centres and the main shopping areas to make sure these are also up to date.



### 8.9.7

The centres listed in the hierarchy are supported by a network of local shopping parades that meet the day-to-day needs of local communities. The current Local Plan protects these through a community facilities policy, as national policy does not allow them to be protected as retail centres.

### 8.9.8

As identified in the hierarchy, the borough's principal retail centre is Basingstoke town centre. Although the centre continues to perform well, in recent years there has been an increase in the number of vacant properties and a reduction in footfall in some parts. The council is currently developing a masterplan for Basingstoke town centre, which will consider the future role and purpose of different parts of the centre and how it relates to surrounding areas such as Basing View. The Local Plan Update could include specific policies to help deliver the key outcomes of the strategy.

### 8.9.9

Although national policy directs development towards centres, large out of centre retail and leisure development may still be allowed where it is supported by a suitable Impact Assessment. This is a way of assessing whether new development would harm the future success of the defined centres. The nationally-set threshold for requiring an Impact Assessment is 2,500sqm. The current Local Plan reduced that to 250sqm on the basis that anything larger could result in harm to the high street. In order to ensure that the town centre is protected, it is suggested that this approach continues in the Local Plan Update.

### 8.9.10

It is recognised that the borough has a number of out-of-centre retail areas, some of which are past their prime and have high levels of vacancy. If proposals are brought forward to redevelop these sites for alternative uses, this would help to support the Local Plan's town centre first approach. However, the council recognises that if floorspace is lost in these areas, it may need to be reprovided elsewhere.

### 8.9.11

The council is also keen to regenerate Basingstoke Leisure Park to ensure it remains a viable regional leisure destination. Current proposals include enhanced leisure facilities and a retail outlet centre. Although evidence indicates that there is no capacity for additional retail floorspace in the borough, such a scheme has the potential to provide a different shopping offer to the current town centre, appealing to a wider catchment and drawing in visitors from outside the borough. The size of the site also means that the regeneration of the leisure park has the potential to include leisure facilities of a type and scale that could not be accommodated elsewhere in the borough. The Local Plan Update will need to ensure that any new development at the leisure park would not result in adverse impacts elsewhere, most notably on Basingstoke town centre.



#### Section 8 – Questions:

8(t) Do you agree with retaining the current retail hierarchy?

8(u) Should any new centres be identified?

8(v) Do you think the boundaries of any Town, District or Local Centres and Primary Shopping Areas (as defined in the current Local Plan) need to be extended or reduced? If so, which and why?

8(w) Should the Local Plan Update retain the lower threshold for when an Impact Assessment for out of centre retail is required? If not, what should the threshold be?

8(x) Would you support the replacement of out of centre retailing to other uses (for example, change of use to residential)?

8(y) Do you have any comments on the future role of Basingstoke town centre?

8(z) Do you have any comments on the regeneration of the Basingstoke Leisure Park, including suitable future uses?



## 9. Protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment

### 9.1 Borough overview and current approach

#### 9.1.1

The borough has a range of important natural and heritage assets that are valued by residents and visitors. It can be seen from annual monitoring that the current Local Plan policies are working well in protecting the environment and therefore it is suggested that these policy approaches are broadly carried forward to the Local Plan Update. However, in light of some changes to national planning guidance and also the introduction of the Environment Bill, there is an opportunity to strengthen some policy areas.

### 9.2 Landscape

#### 9.2.1

The borough's countryside is a key natural asset, sustaining biodiversity, offering tranquillity and providing an important resource for carbon storage. It provides for agriculture and rural businesses, as well as tourism and leisure activities. It comprises a range of landscape types including chalk downland, river valleys, and lowland farming interspersed with villages, hamlets and some larger settlements. A large area to the north west of the Borough is designated as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a landscape of national importance.

#### 9.2.2

The current Local Plan seeks to ensure that new development protects and enhances the character and visual quality of the landscape, and highlights the national importance of the North Wessex Downs AONB. It is supported by a Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018). Neighbourhood Plans also identify important landscape features, including locally valued views and vistas. This approach is in line with the latest national guidance and supports the objective of the Council Plan to improve river and landscape quality. Horizon 2050 highlights the importance that residents place on the rural beauty and greenness of the borough.



### 9.2.3

It is proposed that the current policy approach to landscape issues is retained, with a review of the detailed criteria in light of the latest Landscape Character Assessment and other council documents, and further detail on the protection of the North Wessex Downs AONB in support of national guidance and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. The Plan will continue to require development to be sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the local area, and so to have regard to Natural England's National Character Areas.

## 9.3 Strategic gaps

### 9.3.1

The current Local Plan defines a number of strategic gaps between settlements. The aim of the gaps is to seek to prevent the coalescence of settlements and maintain their separate identities. The approach permits small scale development in these areas when it respects the rural nature and openness of the gap. The use of Settlement Policy Boundaries to define settlements also prevents sprawl into the countryside and ensures that towns and villages don't join. Whilst national policy does not identify strategic gaps as a policy approach, their purpose supports both national and local objectives. Horizon 2050 highlights a continuing local desire to protect rural identities and keep rural settlements separate from Basingstoke.

### 9.3.2

The policy has been effective in preventing coalescence and it is proposed that the approach is retained in the Local Plan Update. However, some of the gap boundaries may need to be updated in light of the new evidence base, policies set out in Neighbourhood Plans and also new site allocations included in the Local Plan Update.

#### Section 9 – Questions:

9(a) Are there any areas of land which should be designated as a new Strategic Gap? If yes, please explain where and why?

9(b) Are there any Strategic Gaps which should be deleted? If yes, where and why?

9(c) Should any existing Strategic Gap boundary be updated? If yes, where and why?



## 9.4 Green infrastructure and local green spaces

### 9.4.1

The borough has a significant network of green infrastructure assets – including parks, open spaces and habitats, which provide an important resource for people and wildlife. Green infrastructure provides attractive environments for outdoor recreation and exercise; helping to create a sense of place; providing biodiversity and habitat enhancement opportunities; as well as presenting other environmental benefits such as assisting natural drainage to reduce flooding and help us adapt to climate change. One of the key aims of the council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy \(2018\)](#) is to manage, protect and restore existing green infrastructure and to expand and reconnect green infrastructure where required.

### 9.4.2

The current Local Plan policy protects the network of Green Infrastructure across the borough, as well as requiring new developments to provide new green space in accordance with adopted standards. This supports national guidance which recognises the value of local access to high quality open spaces, as well as council priorities to maintain the natural environment, support wellbeing and assist in responding to our declared Climate Emergency. To date, the policy has worked effectively, and it is proposed that this approach is continued largely unchanged. However, the Local Plan Update does provide an opportunity to improve areas of poor green infrastructure connectivity and also provide an overall increase in the net canopy cover from trees across the whole borough. For example, targets for canopy cover and green infrastructure connectivity could be introduced on a ward basis.



### 9.4.3

In addition to the general level of protection given to open spaces through Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies, such plans are also able to designate specific green spaces of particular local significance and character as 'Local Green Spaces'. This affords them even greater protection in the planning system consistent to protection given to Green Belts. A number of such spaces have already been designated by local communities within Neighbourhood Plans, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy also lists a number of valued parks and open spaces which are considered to meet the relevant criteria set out in national planning guidance. The designation should only be used where:

- The green space is reasonably close to the community it serves;
- Is demonstrably special to the local community and holds particular local significance because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife; and
- Is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

### 9.4.4

Such spaces can be identified through updates to Local Plans but must be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. If this approach is taken, Neighbourhood Plans and the Green Infrastructure Strategy would be used as a starting point in the identification of suitable spaces for designation.

#### Section 9 – Questions:

9(d) Would you support the designation of Local Green Spaces through the Local Plan Update and neighbourhood plans? If not, why is this?

9(e) Are there any specific areas that you consider meet the criteria and should be designated? If so, please complete the [Local Green Space Promotion form](#).



## 9.5 Water quality

### 9.5.1

Water is a valuable resource, important to our health, the environment, wildlife and local landscapes. The borough contains a number of important and attractive water environments that support high quality biodiversity. For example, the River Loddon is classified as a high quality chalk river warranting special protection of both the water quality and ecology, whilst the River Test and some of its associated river valley habitats is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is subject to an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme to maintain and enhance the landscape and protect archaeological and historical features.

## 9.5.2

The southern and western parts of the borough drain into the Rivers Test and Itchen catchments which ultimately run into the Solent. Groundwater quality within the Test catchment is of concern and development needs to be managed to avoid contamination. There is currently an issue with the amount of nitrates that are entering the Solent and affecting protected wildlife sites. Development will only be allowed if it does not increase the amount of nitrates entering the Rivers Test and Itchen (directly or via groundwater) to ensure protection of the wildlife sites.

## 9.5.3

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out a number of relevant objectives, including the aim to achieve 'good' status for all water bodies to prevent deterioration of surface water and groundwater. The Loddon catchment has been failing to meet the good ecological status of the WFD although monitoring of water quality over the last 5 years has shown some improvement in the quality of parts of the River Loddon and Silchester Brook. The latest classifications are due to be published soon. These classifications, together with the council's own evidence base, will be used to ensure that proposed growth in the borough does not cause harm to the quality of the River Loddon or other water bodies.

## 9.5.4

The current Local Plan aims to protect, manage and improve both the quality of the borough's water environment, particularly water bodies which are currently failing the WFD requirements, and the quantity of water in our rivers and aquifers. It encourages the use of sustainable drainage systems in new developments and requires new development to be water efficient, in order to manage water demand. The Council Plan seeks to improve biodiversity, river and landscape quality. Horizon 2050 recognises the natural environment as a key strength for the borough, and that growth should minimise the impact it has on natural systems.

## 9.5.5

This approach remains in accordance with relevant guidance. However, the Local Plan Update will be informed by current assessments of the water environment and will consider any future impact which may result from additional growth. It will also respond to any updates to the WFD classifications (and also River Basin Management Plans), in addition to the outcomes of any subsequent monitoring.

## 9.6 Managing flood risk

### 9.6.1

New development should be located and designed to be safe from flooding and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Recent flooding events across the country have highlighted the important role of planning in minimising flood risk and addressing the impact of climate change on flooding in the future. Approximately 3% of the borough is within the floodplain. Groundwater levels are also high across certain areas and this poses the most significant risk, being a direct cause of flooding. There are also risks from other sources as a result of heavy rainfall and limited capacity of drainage infrastructure.

### 9.6.2

A new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the borough provides a robust evidence base for considering flooding, including any future increases resulting from climate change. This will be used, along with other available sources, to identify areas at risk of flooding. The current Local Plan seeks to direct development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding by setting out the sequential and exception test requirements. It requires the use of sustainable drainage systems for larger developments and in locations at risk of flooding, and sets out when Flood Risk Assessments are required. It remains in line with national guidance. Monitoring has shown that the current approach has been effective and therefore will remain largely unchanged, subject to any recommendations in the SFRA.

## 9.7 Biodiversity

### 9.7.1

The current Local Plan has been successful in protecting biodiversity and it is considered that relevant policies should generally be retained. This includes the approach to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (designated as an internationally important breeding habitat for three rare bird populations) which requires all new residential development that would have a significant effect on the SPA to fully mitigate their effects. However, the Local Plan Update is an opportunity to reflect new national requirements for biodiversity net gain and also reflect the council's proactive approach to encouraging biodiversity across the borough as exemplified by the pilot Biodiversity Improvement Zone project at Hatch Warren and Beggarwood. This project, which is one of the first of its kind in the county, seeks to improve habitats for wildlife and flora by managing road verges and open spaces differently.

## 9.7.2

National guidance requires all development sites to achieve a biodiversity net gain, and the Environment Bill will set a legal requirement for new developments over 0.1 ha to improve a site's biodiversity value (in terms of habitats rather than species) by at least 10%. This can be calculated using a metric comparing the amount and condition of the habitat on a site before development and the amount of habitat and its condition proposed to be created and/or enhanced after development.

## 9.7.3

Key issues to consider include:

- Whether a requirement for net gain greater than 10% can be justified;
- Whether the council is able to adopt its own biodiversity metric that reflects local interests/features, rather than the standard Defra Metric;
- The continued use of the mitigation hierarchy. This should avoid important habitats being impacted as a first step, set out when on-site habitat improvements will be required, and finally when off-site compensation should be sought. This should also consider suitable ways in which householder developments and sites of less than 0.1ha can still deliver biodiversity net gain;
- A requirement for developers to produce management plans to ensure that on-site or off-site habitat creation and enhancement schemes deliver the required benefits over the longer term;
- Whether a strategic approach to off-site compensation across the borough is suitable, focusing upon areas with greatest potential to enhance ecological networks through the use of existing network mapping available; and
- How best to monitor when the proposed habitats to be created have been achieved and are being maintained in the long term.

## 9.7.4

As outlined in the water quality section, the Local Plan Update will also need to ensure that new developments that drain into the River Test and River Itchen are nitrate neutral, to protect designated sites in the Solent. The council will need to consider whether a strategic approach to biodiversity compensation could be coordinated with opportunities to mitigate nitrates.



### Section 9 – Questions:

9(f) Should the Local Plan Update require more than 10% biodiversity net gain?

9(g) How should off-site compensation measures be coordinated and/or located?

9(h) Are there any other key elements of biodiversity net gain that should be reflected in the Local Plan Update?

## 9.8 Air Quality

### 9.8.1

Horizon 2050 prioritises the need to maintain and improve the quality of life enjoyed by residents and ensure good levels of air quality. The council is currently developing a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy to ensure these priorities are properly considered. There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas in the borough, and the council has been working with Hampshire County Council to put in place relevant measures to improve air quality.

### 9.8.2

National guidance sets out that Local Plans should help to secure net improvements in overall air quality where possible, taking account of relevant trends and identifying opportunities to improve it, including through mitigation using measures such as travel management and green infrastructure provision. Consequently, current Local Plan policies will need to be updated to reflect these aims, which will also be a key factor in determining where future development should be focused. The suitability of including a specific air quality policy in the Local Plan Update will also be considered.



### Section 9 – Questions:

9(i) Are there any particular issues relating to air quality that should be reflected in the Local Plan Update?

## 9.9 Heritage

### 9.9.1

The range and quality of heritage assets within the borough is considerable.

## 9.9.2

Many of our towns and villages, including Basingstoke, are of historic and architectural interest. These settlements include individual buildings, groups of buildings, and areas of interest, some of which have been designated as conservation areas. Buildings and places of note range from grand historic houses, places of worship and mill complexes, to residential areas made up of Victorian terraces, civic buildings and other buildings related to industry and commerce. There are also a number of scheduled monuments and other sites and features of archaeological interest.

## 9.9.3

The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets are important for cultural, economic and social reasons. Heritage should be valued for its own sake and for its important contribution to the quality of place and quality of life in the borough. Heritage assets impact on the character, sense of place and local distinctiveness of the places where people work, live and visit. The current policy and supporting Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (2019) have been successful in protecting the borough's heritage and remain broadly compatible with national guidance. It is therefore appropriate for the current policy approach to remain largely unchanged with only minor updates to bring it in line with current national guidance and terminology.

# 10. Meeting the housing needs of all

## 10.1 Role of the Local Plan

### 10.1.1

The Local Plan should ensure that a strategy is put in place for meeting the borough's housing needs and addresses issues of affordability, ensuring appropriate and accessible homes for everyone. In order to do this, the Plan will need to take into account changing demographic patterns to deliver homes that are of the right size, type and tenure to meet the needs of a range of households including families with children, young people and older people.

## 10.2 Affordable housing

### 10.2.1

There is a high level of affordable housing need in the borough. There are more than 4,000 households on the council's housing register (seeking rented properties) including many households, especially young people, who wish to purchase a home but are unable to do so. The council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2020) identifies the importance of meeting such needs.

## 10.2.2

There is also a high demand for tenures which can make home ownership more accessible and affordable, and almost 1,000 people have signed up to the council's Your Home mailing list to be notified about opportunities when they arise. The council is therefore also keen to support the delivery of low cost home ownership tenures (the Government has recently proposed a new tenure called First Homes which would have their price discounted by at least 30% for perpetuity).

## 10.2.3

The current Local Plan requires that 40% of homes on large sites should be affordable housing. Of these, 70% should be available for rent (at rates at least 80% below market rent) and 30% should be low cost homes for sale (for example, through products such as shared ownership). The council has been successful in delivering policy-compliant levels of affordable housing.

## 10.2.4

National policy requires the Plan to meet the needs of those who cannot afford to rent or buy a home, so the council has commissioned a study to better understand these needs and see whether the percentages outlined above should change. The study will inform how much affordable housing is required and the types of products that would best meet needs. Where rented accommodation is provided, it will be important to ensure that the rents are sufficiently discounted to be affordable to local residents.

## 10.2.5

In line with national policy, the current Local Plan also supports affordable housing in rural areas on 'exception sites' where normal market housing would not otherwise be permitted. It is suggested that this policy support remains in an updated Plan. The council is a member of the Hampshire Homes Hub which can provide support to local communities who want to bring forward such proposals.



### Section 10 – Questions:

- 10(a) How much discount should be applied to the rent level on rented affordable homes to ensure they are able to meet local needs?
- 10(b) Which low cost home ownership products could be most suitable in the borough?
- 10(c) Are there any principles that should inform the types of products that we seek?
- 10(d) Should the Local Plan do more to support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas? If so, how?



## 10.3 Homes for older people and other groups with support needs

### 10.3.1

Over the next plan period, the biggest demographic change will be the increase in the size of the older population. By 2038, there will be an additional 16,000 residents in this age group including 10,000 additional residents over the age of 75. Older residents have told the council that they would like to maintain their independence and stay in their own homes for as long as possible. This can be supported through appropriate housing, including single-storey house types such as bungalows, and through the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes (built to advanced building regulations standards and, for example, including features such as step free accesses). These dwellings can also help to meet some of the needs of people with physical and learning disabilities. If the policy could deliver a step change in the size of this stock, it would greatly increase the likelihood of a resident with needs being able to live in a suitable home. There may also be a role for homes built in clusters, which are particularly suitable for residents with support needs.

### 10.3.2

Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that the expansion of specialist accommodation will still be needed because not all needs can be addressed through mainstream housing. The current Local Plan identifies that specialist accommodation should be delivered as part of large residential sites but also provides flexibility for these to be provided outside settlements where there is a need. Given the critical importance of ensuring these occupiers have access to wider community services, activities and networks, it may be suitable for the Local Plan Update to identify specific sites, either on highly sustainable stand-alone sites or as part of infrastructure-rich residential-led developments, to meet this need.

#### Options for homes for older people and those with support needs

##### Option 1:

All new housing should be built to advanced accessibility standards (where technically achievable and viable). This could include a proportion of wheelchair-adaptable dwellings, to meet needs.

##### Option 2:

Accessible and adaptable dwellings should only be required to meet the number of additional households that will require such accommodation (circa 20%).



### Section 10 – Questions:

10(e) Which option would you support for homes for older people and those with support needs?

10(f) Are there any other options that should be considered?

### Options for specialist accommodation (such as care homes)

#### Option 1:

Continue current strategy of securing specialist accommodation on large windfall sites.

#### Option 2:

Require specialist accommodation on the largest, most sustainable housing allocations. Permit specialist accommodation within settlements, and exceptionally outside settlements, where unmet need exists.

#### Option 2:

Allocate sites in the Local Plan Update to meet need for specialist accommodation.

### Section 10 – Questions:



10(g) Which option (or combination of options) would you support for specialist accommodation?

10(h) Are there any other options that should be considered?

10(i) Do you have any views on the following issues:

- i. What types of sites are most suitable for specialist accommodation?
- ii. Should the policy distinguish between different types of specialist accommodation and the needs of different types of occupiers?

## 10.4 Housing mix, size and type

### 10.4.1

The council's evidence highlights a need for a mix of new homes with a particular borough-wide requirement for homes with two and three bedrooms. This is due to both the borough's ageing population which will result in an increase in one and two person households and the trend towards smaller households throughout life.

## 10.4.2

There will still be a need for family homes as well as a need for small units including Houses of Multiple Occupation, provided these are well designed and suitably located, for example by being well integrated into the street scene and having sufficient parking.

## 10.4.3

It is recognised that sites in different parts of the borough will require different mixes of dwellings in terms of size and type to meet local need and create mixed and sustainable communities. For example, some rural communities have identified a particular need for smaller dwellings in their neighbourhood plans.



### Options for the size and mix of market housing

#### Option 1:

Retain a criteria-based policy to determine the mix of homes by size and type on a site-by-site basis.

#### Option 2:

Set out a specific mix of sizes of market homes as a starting point for negotiations. The precise requirement could include some flexibility to take account of local circumstances. This could include different requirements in urban and rural parts of the borough.

#### Option 3:

Allow the housing market to decide what size and type of homes are built.

### Section 10 – Questions:

10(j) Which option would you support for the size and mix of market housing?

10(k) Are there any other options that should be considered?

10(l) What considerations should be taken into account in informing an appropriate mix?

10(m) Should the Local Plan Update set out specific policy requirements for Houses of Multiple Occupation? If so, what should these be?



## 10.5 Self-build and custom house building

### 10.5.1

Self-build and custom housebuilding offers the opportunity for residents to be involved in the design and construction of their own homes. The benefits include increasing the supply of housing, enabling more people to get on the housing ladder (through lower cost housing), enabling a range of smaller developers into the local housebuilding market and providing a greater mix and variety of homes. Modular housing may be one way to help deliver homes of this type.

### 10.5.2

There has been a high demand for self-build plots in the borough. In the last four years more than 250 people have registered their interest in obtaining a plot with the council. The council has a duty to provide plots equivalent to the number of people who have joined the register.

### 10.5.3

So far, requirements have been met by plots permitted on the large housing allocations and through other windfall development. This is in line with the strategy set out in the council's adopted Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Based upon current levels of demand, a continuation of this approach would justify a policy requiring 5% of homes on the largest sites to be self-build. However, it is recognised that there are long lead in times associated with such sites and that they may not deliver the type of living environment that some self-builders aspire to. The council could therefore consider allocating specific sites for self-build or encouraging them to be brought forward on smaller sites in rural parts of the borough through neighbourhood planning.

#### Options for how the council should meet its future requirement for self-build plots

##### Option 1:

Continue to seek a proportion of self-build plots on larger housing sites.

##### Option 2:

In addition to the above, also allocate specific sites in the Local Plan Update exclusively for self-build.

##### Option 3:

Encourage the delivery of self-build plots through Neighbourhood Plans and on community-led housing schemes.



## Section 10 – Questions:

10(n) Which option would you support for how the council should meet its future requirement for self-build plots?

10(o) Are there any other options that should be considered?

## 10.6 Meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers

### 10.6.1

The council must assess the need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in the borough, and if a need is identified, provide sites to meet that need. An [assessment of accommodation needs](#) carried out in 2017 concluded that the requirement for new pitches in the borough was relatively low at nine, with no requirement for travelling show people. Four pitches have been permitted to date which can be counted towards the supply, with a further six due to be secured on the golf course housing allocation and at Manydown.

### 10.6.2

A new assessment currently being carried out will provide an up to date picture of needs for the Local Plan Update. The new need assessment is likely to identify a requirement for further pitches to be provided, and the council will need to establish a strategy for providing these. This will be essential for the Local Plan Update to meet statutory requirements as this will stop inappropriate sites coming forward on the basis of existing needs not being met.

### 10.6.3

The current approach to accommodating needs in the borough is through the provision of pitches on the largest housing allocations. This has been successful to some extent, although the reliance on the delivery of large sites has resulted in a short fall in provision over the shorter term. The Local Plan Update could continue with this approach or adopt a new strategy.

### 10.6.4

A change to the existing strategy would be to broaden the approach and require the provision of new traveller pitches on other housing sites rather than just the largest ones. This would provide a broader spread of traveller sites and increase the speed of delivery as the largest sites often take longer to start.

## 10.6.5

Alternatively, the Local Plan Update could allocate new pitches on specific stand-alone sites. However, only a very limited number of sites have been promoted to the council as available for this use. This means that provision will be limited to a few areas, which may not be appropriate. The sites available may also not be able to accommodate the borough's need requirements.

### Options for gypsy and traveller pitches

#### Option 1:

Continue to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers through a policy requirement for provision on larger residential led site allocations.

#### Option 2:

Alter the existing strategy to require the provision of traveller pitches on a broader mix of housing sites.

#### Option 3:

Allocate specific stand-alone site/sites to accommodate the needs of gypsies and travellers.

#### Option 4:

A combination of the options above, for example allocating stand-alone sites which are available, with the remainder to be provided on housing allocations.

### Section 10 – Questions:

10(p) Which option would you support for how the council should meet its future requirement for gypsy and traveller pitches?

10(q) Are there any other options that should be considered?



## **11. Ensuring the timely delivery of the right infrastructure and meeting community needs**

### **11.1 Providing new infrastructure**

#### **11.1.1**

In order to create high quality places to live, residents need good access to services and facilities that meet their day to day needs. This means that infrastructure such as healthcare, community facilities and schools should be accessible, with capacity to meet needs, alongside services such as shops and leisure facilities. Whilst new development creates a need for new facilities and services, it can also provide an opportunity to deliver new or improved facilities where there are deficits, in order to support communities. Horizon 2050 highlights that maintaining a balance of high-quality but sufficiently local activities is important to residents.

#### **11.1.2**

At a strategic level, there are on-going discussions about what infrastructure will be required to ensure that residents needs are met in the future and that growth can be delivered and supported. For example, key improvements may be required in terms of transport connectivity, including rail related projects and those linked to the main highway network. Additional growth at Basingstoke may require changes to key transport corridors such as the A33 and A30, in addition to a strategic solution to how Junction 7 of the M3 operates. In order to ensure the delivery of appropriate infrastructure, the council is involved in on-going engagement with bodies such as Highways England and Network Rail to ensure that needs are fully understood. The council will also continue to work closely with the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership and neighbouring authorities to develop a shared approach to improving infrastructure.

#### **11.1.3**

Strategic services and facilities may also be required over the plan period. For example, consideration is currently being given to the future of Basingstoke hospital. Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT) have received seed funding from Government to support the development of one of the forty new hospital building projects across the country. This would provide patient care for the population of North and Mid Hampshire. Work on a strategic outline business case is being progressed and the Local Plan Update may need to consider both the potential provision of a new facility and the re-use of the current hospital site in Basingstoke, alongside other growth requirements over the Plan period.

### 11.1.4

More locally, new development on smaller sites and in rural locations are often dependent on spare capacity in existing facilities, or require their expansion where there is scope to do so. By contrast, larger sites generally include new provision on-site. Such facilities need to be provided as soon as possible to minimise the impact on existing residents and limit the need to travel for basic services. To enable the delivery of infrastructure to meet the needs of residents, close working is required with service providers to ensure that there is an awareness of need, long-term planning takes place and suitable funding is available. However, account also needs to be taken of the viability of a development and the level of future demand for new facilities and services. For example, it is likely that the education authority would not wish to make provision for a school until there are sufficient children in the local area to justify it.

### 11.1.5

It is also important to plan for the delivery of utilities in new development for residents from the outset. This includes power and water supplies, communication technology, including broadband and telecoms, together with electric vehicle charging points. Of particular importance is the capacity and capability of sewerage treatment works, given identified issues around water quality in the borough. In common with other forms of infrastructure, the provision of utilities is fundamental to creating good places to live and requires early and on-going engagement. This ensures that our emerging growth plans are factored into their business plans for future funding, whilst longer-term planning with service providers allows for consideration of future-proofing, recognising that technology evolves and demand for services can change.

### 11.1.6

In developing the Local Plan Update, the council will assess the existing provision and capacity of facilities and services in the borough to understand where deficits exist and where new or improved facilities may be required. This will include continuing to plan positively to meet needs for social, recreational and cultural facilities and services which are integral to the vibrancy of communities.

#### Options for providing new infrastructure

##### Option 1:

Continue to plan for the timely provision of infrastructure by working with service providers to meet needs through new and expanded facilities linked to new development.

##### Option 2:

Seek new ways of providing infrastructure to ensure its provision as early as possible in the delivery of new communities, through external funding and close working with key partners.



## Section 11 – Questions:

11(a) Which option would you support for the provision of new infrastructure?

11(b) Are there other infrastructure issues that should be considered?

11(c) What types of infrastructure are the most important in the future planning of the borough, particularly in thinking about large sites?

11(d) Are there specific infrastructure issues in your local area to be aware of?

## 11.2 Facilities and services

### 11.2.1

In addition to the provision of new infrastructure, the Local Plan Update will also need to ensure that established facilities and services are able to develop and modernise. It will also need to protect such facilities from being lost to other uses unless it can be demonstrated that it is no longer necessary, practical, desirable or viable to retain them, or it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed.

### 11.2.2

Whilst the current Local Plan has policies to do this, they could be strengthened, for example by requiring the applicant to demonstrate that a facility has no reasonable prospect of being used for an alternative service or facility which would benefit the local community. This approach would provide additional protection to essential facilities and services. The Local Plan Update could also require that the redevelopment of a community facility makes provision for a community facility use as part of that redevelopment unless it can be demonstrated that this is not achievable.

#### Options for essential facilities and services

##### Option 1:

Continue with the current approach as set out within the current Local Plan.

##### Option 2:

Strengthen protection against the loss of a particular facility or service.



## Section 11 – Questions:

11(e) Which option would you support for the council's approach to essential facilities and services?

11(f) There is an opportunity for the Local Plan Update to define what would be classified as an essential facility or service. What facilities and/or services do you consider should be defined as essential within the Local Plan Update?

11(g) Are there any uses which you consider to need more specific policy requirements, either for their provision or protection/retention?

## 11.3 Making provision for community facilities

### 11.3.1

The current Local Plan seeks to provide new community facilities and services on site wherever possible. This means that most sites (generally larger than 400 units) are provided with a community centre. However, this leads to a wide spread of smaller community centres which may not be efficient and able to offer a sufficiently broad range of services for residents to benefit a wider spectrum of the community. Therefore it may now be suitable to focus on creating and/or maintaining existing larger and well established community centres. This approach will prioritise supporting existing community centres and only provide new facilities in locations that best meet the needs of new and existing communities.

#### Options for the provision of new facilities and services on new developments

##### Option 1:

Continue with the current approach of delivering community facilities in most new developments over 400 dwellings.

##### Option 2:

Concentrate on providing fewer, but larger new community centres.

## Section 11 – Questions:

11(h) Which option would you support for the provision of new facilities and services on new developments? Is there more that the Local Plan Update could do to ensure that new development fosters strong communities and meets the needs of residents?

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