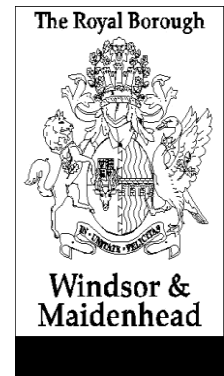


Report for: ACTION
Item Number: 4



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	Part 1
Title	Borough Local Plan Programme
Responsible Officer(s)	Peter Lerner, Interim Planning Policy Manager Sarah Ball, Team Manager (Strategy and Plans)
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Sarah Ball, Team Manager (Strategy and Plans) 01628 796112, sarah.ball@rbwm.gov.uk
For Consideration By	Local Plans Working Group
Date to be Considered	30 June 2015

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the revised programme for the progression of the Borough Local Plan. This report also indicates the wider development plan programme of work that the Planning Policy Team are progressing in relation to minerals and waste.

1. Details of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION: That the Local Plans Working Group:

1. **Notes the content of this report.**

2. Reason for Recommendation and Options Considered

Borough Local Plan Programme

2.1 The future milestones for the progression of the Borough Local Plan are set out on the planning pages of the Council website:

- [Preparation of Second Preferred Options Consultation - to January 2015]
- [Second Preferred Options Consultation considered and agreed by Cabinet - February 2015]
- Summer 2015 Consultation Package
- Second Preferred Options Consultation - November 2015
- Preparation of Final Draft Plan
- Final Draft Plan considered by Cabinet and Council
- Final 'Submission' Consultation
- Submission to Secretary of State for examination
- Examination (including hearings) by Planning Inspector
- Receive Inspector's report
- Adoption.

2.2 In May 2015, the Lead Member for Planning, recommended that the timing of the next consultation on the Borough Local Plan should be revised. This was in relation to two key issues:

a) Duty to Cooperate

The Council were criticised in responses to the first Preferred Options for not engaging in the preparation of evidence and engaging before making decisions. A number of councils responded stating the council had failed to comply with the Duty and raising objections to policies. To avoid a repeat and lessen the chance of the plan being found unsound at examination, it is important that sufficient time to engage on a meaningful basis is allowed. Actions undertaken elsewhere include providing opportunity to comment on methodologies, workshops to explore issues, workshops to present outcomes of evidence and a clear audit trail of these matters being considered by officers and councillors.

b) Functional geography and emerging evidence

The agreement of functional geography and the related development need is key to underpinning strategic planning, including discussions under the Duty to Cooperate. The council has jointly commissioned with the other Berkshire local authorities an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This will define the functional housing geography and related development needs. Originally scheduled to be completed in May, completion is not anticipated in late July / August. Discussions are continuing on joint work to define the functional economic area.

- 2.3 In order for this work to feed into the Borough Local Plan process, the Lead Member therefore recommended that the Second Preferred Options Consultation should be delayed until the autumn in order to allow for full and explicit examination and discussion of the Berkshire SHMA in particular.
- 2.4 At the same time, an opportunity was identified by officers for a programme of consultation events planned over the summer which would deal with a number of Borough Local Plan matters. Whilst a separate report on this agenda deals with this in more detail, the list below identifies what is included in the proposed consultation programme:
- Call for sites consultation
 - Edge of Settlement Analysis
 - Berkshire commissioned Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
 - Retail Study
 - Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Options Paper (following the receipt of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment)
 - Transport Modelling
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - Functional Economic Market Area
- 2.5 Two consultations are already underway. A 'call for sites' Consultation began on 22nd May 2015 whilst the Retail Study Duty to Cooperate Consultation began on the 27th May 2015.
- 2.6 It is important to expand the consultation in this manner, both in terms of scope and subject matter and time period, given
- 1 the complexity of the subject matter
 - 2 the need for engagement under the Duty to Cooperate
 - 3 the requirement that studies/methodologies flow into the appropriate development of policy. For example, the prerequisites for re-drafting Policy HOU1 (Amount and Distribution of Housing) would include the Berkshire SHMA, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (equivalent of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and an Employment Land Review); Edge of Settlement Analysis; updated transport modelling; flooding sequential test and strategic flood risk assessment (SFRA) and on going work related to the development capacity of Maidenhead Town Centre.)
 - 4 that stretched time should be given to consultees to respond over the fuller length of the Summer.
- 2.7 Accordingly, from now and throughout the summer, officers will undertake a consultation and engagement strategy to include the above elements but also to focus on other outstanding matters affecting Maidenhead (the re-provision of the Magnet Leisure Centre and the capacity of the town centre for new development; Windsor Town Centre (issues around the Windsor Link Railway) and matters

potentially affecting all areas of the Borough – in essence the potential for designating local green spaces in key areas.

- 2.8 To assist this process, the Borough Local Plan: Preferred Options Consultation Statement (June 2015) will also be published alongside the Borough Local Plan consultation documents. The Consultation Statement sets out comments received as a result of previous consultations (and other relevant information.)
- 2.9 Ultimately, the progression of the Borough Local Plan rests on the successful engagement with Duty to Cooperate Bodies, particularly in relation to the SHMA and joint working in relation to the functional economic market area, and revised employment need and supply forecasts. Thus if the above consultation strategy is followed, it will have the following implications for future milestones:

Submission Consultation:	March 2016 / to Council April 2016 (time will be saved if Special Meetings can be called)
Submission to Inspector:	September 2016
Examination:	Sept 2016 – March 2017 (date is dependent on the planning inspectorate)
Inspector's Report:	April 2017
Adoption by Council:	June 2017

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 2.10 The planning pages of the Council website indicate that current minerals and waste planning policy is provided by the saved policies of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire and the Berkshire Waste Local Plan which remain until they are replaced by new planning policy.
- 2.11 To date, the Council considered that such policy replacement would be through the BLP process. As a result of this wording/policies had been incorporated into the emerging BLP (the Preferred Options Consultation document). As the Council is developing the BLP (second Preferred Options consultation document), consideration is now being given to the responses received between January and March 2014 (Preferred Options consultation, natural resources section which included minerals and waste matters). Application of the general 'in principle' comments from these consultation responses will influence the development of this section in terms of: whether to incorporate high level waste policies in the BLP with further detail included in a separate local plan or whether to address such matters in a completely separate local plan.

- 2.12 Since the BLP was consulted upon in 2014, the Council has commenced discussions which relate to development of a joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan. This has resulted in officers reconsidering in detail the approach which should be taken for both future minerals and waste matters. Options for joint working or a shared service are currently being considered between Bracknell Forest, Reading, Wokingham and RBWM. The Councils Chief Executives have agreed that this option merits further exploration. At this stage such matters are being 'scoped out' which includes governance arrangements, general topic areas which require planning policy coverage, timescales and costings, etc.
- 2.13 Consideration will be given to employment of consultants by other local authorities on our behalf or direct employment of staff across the Boroughs/districts, once the initial matters listed above have been agreed. At this stage, the authorities are potentially going to work collaboratively with West Berkshire Council who could then lead on producing a plan for East and Central Berkshire. The mechanisms for such an approach still require further exploration. If the Joint Plan does not proceed, a Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be required to be progressed by the borough.
- 2.14 Once the 'scoping' matters are agreed or become more formalised, the Council would expect to progress to strategy development, evidence base gathering / monitoring and development of a timetable (resourcing) as these will be critical components at this early stage. Officers anticipate considerable challenges in collation of evidence due to the historic methods of data collection within Berkshire.
- 2.15 At this stage, the initial timetable relating to a joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan can not be formalised (in terms of the anticipated dates for formal consultation stages, examination or adoption) until further work on agreeing governance arrangements and the scope of a joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan is finalised. If the plan is to be developed, we expect to have reached agreement on the governance arrangements by the end of 2015.