

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD): Preferred Options for Consultation
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	22 July 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	C2844

Purpose of Report: To consider the preferred options version of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD.

Recommended Action: That Council resolve that:

1. The preferred options version of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD is approved for public consultation.
2. Delegated authority is given to the Head of Planning and Countryside to agree any minor typographical and presentational changes to the preferred options version of the DPD and supporting documentation before publication.

Reason for decision to be taken: The production of the DPD will ensure an up to date planning framework for the District in terms of site allocations and updated policies.

Other options considered: None considered.

Key background documentation: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Town and Country Planning (Local Government) (England) Regulations 2012
West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026
Local Development Scheme May 2014

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

- CSP1 – Caring for and protecting the vulnerable**
- CSP2 – Promoting a vibrant district**
- CSP4 – Protecting the environment**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principles:

- CSP5 - Putting people first**
- CSP7 - Empowering people and communities**
- CSP8 - Doing what's important well**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:

Producing planning policy documents for the District to proactively guide development will help the Council in doing what's important well.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Hilary Cole - Tel (01635) 248542
E-mail Address:	hcole@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	24 June 2014

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Liz Alexander
Job Title:	Planning Policy Team Leader
Tel. No.:	01635 519512
E-mail Address:	lalexander@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

- Policy:** The West Berkshire Core Strategy sets out the strategic direction for the Council's planning policy, setting out the broad strategy for development in West Berkshire to 2026. The Housing Site Allocations DPD implements the spatial framework of the Core Strategy to allocate non-strategic housing sites to contribute towards meeting the District's longer term objectively assessed housing need. It is also an opportunity to update some parts of the planning policies that provide the starting point for development management decisions.
- Financial:** The Council is committed to producing planning policy documents in accordance with the stated timescale set out within the adopted Local Development Scheme. Budgetary provision has been made to carry out the relevant work.
- Personnel:** N/A
- Legal/Procurement:** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the local planning authority to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development. The West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD seeks to take forward a commitment to fulfil this obligation.
- Property:** N/A
- Risk Management:** The risks to development management are much higher without an up to date development plan in place (planning by appeal).

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality				<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the adoption of the West Berkshire Core Strategy in July 2012, the Council is preparing a Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to allocate non-strategic housing sites across the District and to allocate sites for Gypsies and Travellers. Some policies are also being updated as part of this process, namely those related to development in the countryside, residential parking standards and an amended policy to guide the future development of Sandford Park.

2. Key Issues

- (a) The DPD has been prepared in conformity with the Core Strategy, and allocates sites in accordance with the spatial strategy as set out in the Core Strategy – which defines four spatial areas with a settlement hierarchy of urban areas, rural service centres and service villages within them.
- (b) The housing requirement in the Core Strategy is ‘at least’ 10,500 dwellings. This was allocated to the district by the regional tier of government which has now been abolished.
- (c) The Council is required to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to advise on the future ‘objectively assessed need’ of the District. The SHMA is underway, and being carried out in partnership with neighbouring authorities. The output of this SHMA will ultimately be a longer term housing number for the District.
- (d) The housing allocations within the Housing Site Allocations DPD are allocating the first part of this housing requirement. A new Local Plan will then be prepared to allocate the rest of any new housing requirement and to deal with other policy issues. A background paper explaining the Council’s approach is set out as Appendix B.
- (e) A Regulation 18 consultation was held as part of the preparation of the DPD and a summary of the responses received, together with the proposed officer response is attached as part of the Statement of Consultation (Appendix D).
- (f) The major part of the DPD is allocations for housing, which have been assessed in an objective and consistent manner, using site selection criteria together with the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment framework. The Preferred Options DPD is attached as Appendix A. The SA/SEA Environmental Report is Appendix C.
- (g) There is a requirement in national policy for West Berkshire Council to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The preferred options sites are included as part of the DPD set out in Appendix A.
- (h) Policies on residential parking standards and an updated policy on Sandford Park are both included within the DPD at Appendix A.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment that is attached as Appendix G shows that the Housing Site Allocations DPD will have positive effects on a range of groups. No negative impacts have been identified.
- 3.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out for the Core Strategy (adopted July 2012) and this was tested at Examination by an independent Planning Inspector.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 If Council considers that the draft Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document should be published for consultation, this will take place for a 7 week period from 25 July to 12 September 2014.
- 4.2 Following the consultation, officers will prepare a publication version of the plan for Council in December 2014, which takes account of the comments received.

Executive Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council adopted its Core Strategy in July 2012. This sets out a housing requirement for the District of 'at least' 10,500 dwellings from 2006-2026. The number was allocated via the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (the South East Plan). The regional tier of Government has since been abolished.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy sets out an overall spatial strategy to accommodate this level of housing across the District and in addition it allocates two large strategic sites in Newbury (Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park).
- 1.3 Whilst the Core Strategy allocates strategic development and sets out strategic policies, it only forms one part of the Local Plan. There is therefore a requirement to prepare additional document/s to allocate non-strategic housing sites across the District and to allocate sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

Non-strategic housing allocations for Newbury and the rest of the District are therefore being allocated through a Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD) in accordance with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy.

- 1.4 In order to find the Core Strategy sound, the Inspector who examined the Core Strategy committed the Council to a review, within 3 years of its adoption, of the housing numbers for the District via the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to be carried out in partnership with neighbouring authorities in the housing market area.

2. Approach to the DPD

- 2.1 The Council is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to meet the 'full, objectively assessed needs' of the area. Work is underway to establish this requirement by undertaking a SHMA in partnership with other Berkshire authorities. Once the objectively assessed need has been established, agreement will then need to be reached about how this need will be met across the Housing Market Area, leading to a new housing requirement for the District's new Local Plan
- 2.2 By prioritising a HSA DPD at the earliest opportunity, rather than wait for the outcome of the SHMA, West Berkshire Council is pro-actively allocating non-strategic housing sites in accordance with the spatial strategy as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. This is positively planning for the District through the planned system as set out in the NPPF. This housing allocation will allocate the remainder of the 'at least' 10,500 housing figure from the Core Strategy, with added flexibility including Sandford Park and windfalls.
- 2.3 The approach is for the housing allocations within the HSA DPD to be seen as allocating the first part of any new housing requirement based on meeting the objectively assessed housing needs, in the short to medium term. Following the adoption of the HSA DPD, a new Local Plan will be prepared. This will allocate the rest of our new housing requirement and look longer term, as well as dealing with the other policy issues. Full details of the Council's approach are set out in a background paper, attached as Appendix B.

- 2.4 The timeline for the preparation of the HSA DPD as set out in the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) is:
- (a) Consulting on scope of Sustainability Appraisal - September 2013 to October 2013
 - (b) Public participation in the preparation of the DPD - September 2013 to December 2014
 - (c) Publication of Proposed Submission Documents - December 2014
 - (d) Submission to Secretary of State - April 2015
 - (e) Start of Independent Examination - June 2015
 - (f) Adoption - December 2015

3. Progress on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 3.1 The Council was committed to a review of its housing numbers through the preparation of a SHMA by the Inspector for several reasons:
- (a) The revocation of the Regional Strategy which allocated the housing number for the District, and the timing of this.
 - (b) The emergence of the NPPF (March 2012) as the sole higher tier guidance for the preparation of Local Plans, and the key principle within this document to "boost significantly the supply of housing". The NPPF commits the local planning authority to "use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing..." (para 47) unless "...any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits...." (para 14).
 - (c) The Inspector's conclusion that the Core Strategy did not fulfil the NPPF requirement of meeting objectively assessed needs in full.
 - (d) Other evidence sources presented at the Core Strategy Examination that indicate that the level of housing need and demand may be higher than the South East Plan figure of 10,500.
- 3.2 In order to find the Core Strategy sound, the Inspector therefore committed the Council to a review of needs and demands for housing through a SHMA, to comply with the NPPF, within 3 years of the adoption of the Core Strategy.
- 3.3 The Council has a statutory duty to cooperate with its neighbouring authorities and it is therefore essential that the review of the SHMA is undertaken in conjunction with them. The output needs to quantify future housing need and demand for each of the local authority areas. Work on the SHMA has started, in conjunction with other Berkshire Authorities in the form of a project brief. Neighbouring authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire will also need to be involved in order to comply with the duty to cooperate. The work is currently scheduled to conclude towards the end of the year (2014).

3.4 The SHMA will therefore help to identify the Council's 'objectively assessed' housing need as set out in the NPPF. The HSA DPD will identify site allocations to meet the first proportion of the objectively assessed need. A Local Plan will then be prepared, to look longer term, to allocate the rest of the housing requirement based on the objectively assessed housing need and to include all of the detailed development management policies which are needed to determine planning applications in the District. Timetables for both the HSA DPD and the Local Plan are set out in the Council's approved Local Development Scheme and demonstrate the Council's public commitment to assessing and proactively meeting the objectively assessed needs of West Berkshire through the plan-led system.

4. Consultation

4.1 Ongoing consultation work on the HSA DPD to date has included two newsletters to everyone who is registered as having an interest in planning policy matters. There have also been consultations with parish and town councils as part of the process of shortlisting and selecting sites to be included within the DPD.

4.2 A 'Regulation 18' consultation was held between 30 April and 11 June 2014. The Council is required to notify specified bodies and persons of the subject of the DPD which it proposes to prepare and invite each of them to make representations to the Council about what the DPD ought to contain in terms of scope and content. This consultation is a requirement under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012.

4.3 Over 40 responses were received during the Regulation 18 consultation. A table of these responses and a proposed Council response, setting out how representations will be taken into account, is attached as part of the Statement of Consultation at Appendix D. A number of these comments are either promoting or objecting to SHLAA sites. Others are raising issues about the Council's approach to preparing the DPD.

4.4 If Council approves the preferred options draft of the HSA DPD, it will then be published for a 7 week period of consultation between 25 July and 12 September. Whilst this is an informal period of consultation, it is an important opportunity to gauge public opinion on the proposals within the DPD before it is formally published.

5. Duty to Cooperate

5.1 Section 110 of the Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies to cooperate with each other when preparing development plan documents in order to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas.

5.2 Failure to satisfy the Duty will mean that plans cannot be adopted as a Planning Inspector cannot make main modifications to remedy this through the examination process.

5.3 Work on satisfying the Duty is taking place on an ongoing basis. As part of the preparatory work on the DPD, a paper was sent out to those with whom West Berkshire needs to cooperate which sets out how West Berkshire Council will deal with strategic planning issues as part of the preparation of the DPD. The paper

sought comments on the approach as part of the ongoing process of cooperation. The comments received and the Council's response forms part of the Statement of Consultation at Appendix D.

- 5.4 Two memorandums of understanding have also been signed by the Berkshire authorities on strategic planning and on minerals and waste issues. Additionally, one to one discussions are taking place with some of the relevant organisations as part of the process of site selection described further below.

6. Evidence Base

- 6.1 Several evidence base studies have informed the preparation of the DPD and their outcomes are reflected in the SA/SEA Environmental Report set out at Appendix C as they have been used to assess the sites. These include the Landscape Assessment, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). These will be available on the Council's website as background information to support the consultation. Hard copies will be available in the Members Room, with electronic copies available on request.

7. Content of the Housing Site Allocations (HSA) Development Plan Document (DPD)

Housing Site Allocations

- 7.1 The major part of the DPD is the site allocations for housing. The purpose of the HSA DPD is to allocate smaller (non-strategic in scale and function) extensions to settlements within the settlement hierarchy in accordance with the spatial strategy of the adopted West Berkshire Core Strategy. It is a regulatory requirement of the HSA DPD to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy.
- 7.2 Following introductory text, the allocations are set out in the preferred options draft of the DPD (Appendix A) by spatial area, following the framework of the adopted Core Strategy which sets out housing numbers for each of these areas. There are four spatial areas of the District which reflect the distinct characteristics of the different parts of West Berkshire, using the District's settlement hierarchy as the focus for development within these areas. The four spatial areas are as follows:
- (i) Newbury/Thatcham
 - (ii) The East Kennet Valley
 - (iii) The Eastern Area and
 - (iv) The North Wessex Downs AONB
- 7.3 The table at paragraph 7.25 shows the current housing requirement. Officers have looked at new permissions since March 2013 and included a cautious windfall allowance for the first 5 years only (apart from in the AONB where a windfall allowance is included for the whole period due to the housing requirement being 'up to' 2,000 homes) to ensure an appropriate allocation of residential development. The District's settlement hierarchy forms the focus for development within each of the spatial areas, with the majority of development being directed firstly to the urban

areas, followed by the rural service centres, and lastly smaller amounts to the service villages.

7.4 Potential sites for allocation are shown in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (December 2013), following the 'Call for Sites' in the spring of 2013.

7.5 Sites within the SHLAA were assessed as:

- (1) Deliverable – realistic prospect of delivery within 5 years. Development here would be in general conformity with current planning policies
- (2) Developable – suitable location and reasonable prospect of viable development. Development here would be in general conformity with current planning policies
- (3) Potentially Developable – suitability needs to be assessed through the Local Plan.
- (4) Not currently developable – significant constraints to delivery within the plan period.

7.6 Those considered for allocation have typically been assessed as 'Potentially Developable' within the SHLAA. These form the basket of sites from which choices will be made through the plan-led process.

7.7 Consultation with Parish Councils and Ward Members on the SHLAA took place in January and February 2014. The outcomes are included in the Statement of Consultation at Appendix D. These events allowed the parish councils and Ward Members to discuss the sites with officers and to indicate any preferences they had regarding the sites within their parishes. The comments made through these consultation events have been used in the process of site assessment, as these identify local factors relating to each site.

7.8 Site Selection Criteria were drawn up to allow further assessment of the sites included within the SHLAA. The criteria themselves have their basis in national and local policy, focusing on all aspects of sustainability (environmental, social and economic). The criteria have been split into two sections,

(1) **Automatic Exclusion**

Criteria which automatically rule out a site as unsuitable for allocation in the HSA DPD. The first stage was assessing all of the sites against this set of criteria. This determined which sites progress for further consideration and which should be ruled out at an early stage.

The criteria under this heading include sites which are too small to be allocated and those within the settlement boundary, where there is a presumption in favour of development. Other criteria include factors that make a site unsuitable for development, such as significant flood risk (flood zone 3) or a national or international environmental or historical protection (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Registered Battlefields or Historic Parks and Gardens). The impact on the AONB is also taken into consideration, and

where the impact on the landscape character has been shown to be unacceptable a site will be ruled out at this stage.

(2) **Other Considerations**

If not ruled out at the first stage, sites are assessed against other considerations via a set of criteria which allow further consideration of the suitability of the site for development. These factors look in more detail at the suitability of the site and include a wide range of factors from land use, to contamination, to accessibility and capacity (including scope to increase capacity) of local services and facilities.

The relationship to the surrounding area and other potential neighbouring sites is also taken into consideration in this section of the assessment (i.e. cumulative impact).

- 7.9 Members were consulted on the site selection criteria via the Planning Policy Task Group. The site selection criteria are included within Appendix B. The Automatic Exclusion ruled out 175 sites as being unsuitable for allocation. 77 of these were ruled out by the SHLAA, with 98 ruled out through the automatic exclusion factors.
- 7.10 Technical internal and external consultees were also asked for their comments on the sites. These consultees included the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency, Thames Water, the Council's ecologist, archaeologist, highways engineer and environmental health. Their comments have been used to assist in the process of site selection.
- 7.11 Due to the importance of landscape considerations in assessing the SHLAA sites in the AONB, technical landscape work was commissioned to assess the newly promoted sites in the AONB on the same basis as those previously submitted.
- 7.12 The detailed assessment of all of these factors forms a thorough basis from which to assess the sites in an objective and consistent manner to inform the decision making process.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 7.13 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out for all DPDs. Both of these appraisals can be carried out in one appraisal process. In order to avoid any confusion, all references to the SA will refer to both the SA and the SEA.
- 7.14 The objective of the SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations in the preparation of new or revised DPDs. The SA focuses on the significant sustainability effects of the DPD and considers alternatives that take into account the social, environmental and economic objectives and the geographical scope of the documents.
- 7.15 The SA / SEA for each site was only carried out on those sites considered a realistic option for allocation following the two stages set out above. The SA Framework was included in the SA/SEA Scoping Report, which was consulted upon with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage) in September 2013.

- 7.16 As the HSA DPD is set within the framework set out by the adopted Core Strategy, the SA/SEA is an update to that prepared alongside the Core Strategy.
- 7.17 The SA/SEA Environmental Report is set out as Appendix C. This includes full details of how the sites have been assessed and shortlisted.

Housing Site Allocations

- 7.18 Details of the shortlisted sites, together with a map and a summary of the key issues affecting their development are included within Appendix A.
- 7.19 The spatial distribution of the sites reflects the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy and is therefore set out within the four spatial areas of the District. In some cases, it is proposed that more sites be included within the consultation than are needed to meet the housing numbers. Reasons for this include the need for flexibility within the housing numbers and to assess public opinion. In some cases there is a need to continue technical work where there are issues which could affect the future development of the site.
- 7.20 This is particularly the case in the east of the District where there are a number of technical issues affecting development including highways and amenity concerns. In this case, more evidence is sought through the consultation to aid final decision making on which sites would be the most appropriate to include within the publication version of the DPD in this area of the District.
- 7.21 Additional flexibility has been included within the numbers in the East Kennet Valley in case the outcome of the consultation is that the approximate numbers in the Eastern spatial area cannot be found.
- 7.22 A further example where choices are to be made is in Hungerford. The sites which are performing best in the site selection process are a group of sites on the Eddington side of the A4 and a site to the south of Salisbury Road. The sites have different positives and negatives in terms of potential impact on traffic through the town centre and also in terms of accessibility to facilities. Members at Planning Policy Task group therefore asked that they be presented as options to be tested through consultation.
- 7.23 In Lambourn, members of Planning Policy Task Group have asked that 2 sites be included for consultation. Both may not be needed in terms of meeting the requirement for the AONB. In Pangbourne, two sites are included for consultation but one has potential access issues which will be considered further through the consultation process. .
- 7.24 Public consultation is a key part of the preparation stage of the DPD and this informal consultation will provide useful information to assess the sites further.
- 7.25 The table below shows the housing requirement from the Core Strategy to be found in each spatial area, summarises the different elements of housing supply at June 2014 and also summarises (as the final line of the table in bold) the proposed allocation of housing sites by spatial area.

Newbury/Thatcham

Housing Requirement	6,300 approx.
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Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	1,932
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	2,262
Sandleford Park – allocated strategic site	1,000
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	153
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	approx 385
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	160
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations	485

Eastern Spatial Area

Housing Requirement	1,400 approx.
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Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	283
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	427
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	31
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	110
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	14
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 815

North Wessex Downs AONB

Housing Requirement	2,000 max
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Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	855
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	493
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	7
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	16
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	129
Windfall allowance 2019 - 2026	240
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – final choices to be made following consultation	Up to 468

East Kennet Valley

Housing Requirement	800 approx.
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Housing Supply at June 2014	
Dwellings completed at March 2013	364
Dwellings with permission at March 2013	166
Permissions on sites of 10 or more units and prior approvals granted since March 2013	0
Identified sites within settlement boundaries	0
Windfall allowance in 5 year supply	54
Proposed Allocations	
HSA DPD Preferred Options potential allocations – choices to be made following consultation	Up to 320

Review of Settlement Boundaries

- 7.26 Settlement boundaries identify the main built up area of a settlement within which development is likely to be considered acceptable in principle, subject to other policy considerations. While allowing for development, settlement boundaries protect the character of a settlement and prevent unrestricted growth into the countryside. They create a level of certainty about whether or not the principle of development is likely to be acceptable which is helpful for Development Control officers, Members, applicants and members of the public.
- 7.27 It is proposed that the settlement boundaries of those settlements within the defined settlement hierarchy will be re-drawn around the developable areas of the housing allocations, plus around those sites which have been identified as suitable to include within a revised settlement boundary (generally sites suitable for development which are below the usual threshold for allocation).
- 7.28 In addition to these changes, criteria for more detailed settlement boundary reviews are proposed for consultation at this time, to enable further work to be done on revising the settlement boundaries before the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State. The criteria are included in Appendix A.

Policies to guide development in the countryside

- 7.29 The Core Strategy is a strategic document that provides an overall framework for the more detailed policy and site specific proposals to be contained in other parts of the Local Plan. Some of the policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 have been saved and remain in force as part of the development plan.
- 7.30 The NPPF is clear, at para 215, that 'due weight' should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework. The closer the policies in the plan to the policies of the framework, the greater the weight to be given in planning decisions. The saved policies of the District Local Plan have all been assessed for consistency against the NPPF. Some of the policies were assessed as going further than the NPPF because of local circumstances, but matching the overall intent of national policy. There is therefore not a conflict with policy which necessitates urgent updating, and Inspectors are still treating the policies as having due weight.
- 7.31 However, there was some concern from Members that some of the saved policies should be reviewed and updated speedily in order to provide an up to date policy framework to guide planning applications. This relates particularly to those which guide new housing in the countryside.
- 7.32 A draft paper to guide development in the countryside was presented to Planning Policy Task Group in June and they will consider it more fully at the end of July. The policies will be considered by full Council on 18 September and if approved, a period of public consultation will follow. The proposed new policies reflect updated national policy and respond to local issues in West Berkshire. This work has been prepared by an external planning consultant working on a short term contract.

Parking Standards

- 7.33 Work on Parking Standards for residential development has been carried out and it is proposed to consult on these proposed parking standards as part of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document. A policy on the revised parking standards is included in Appendix A. A background explanatory paper is attached as Appendix E.

Sandleford Park

- 7.34 Members will be aware that new evidence is available on two specific elements of the Core Strategy policy on Sandleford Park (CS3). These relate to highways access (where evidence shows benefits to the Highways network of additional all vehicle accesses onto Warren Road and to the A339) and to education provision where updated child yield figures show an increased primary requirement to accommodate pupil numbers arising from the site.
- 7.35 Officers have therefore taken the opportunity to update the policy to ensure that it reflects the most up to date element on highways and access. A requirement to masterplan the site holistically has also been included to ensure that the requirements of the SPD are properly taken into account. All other aspects of the policy remain unchanged. The policy is included in Appendix A with the technical information explaining the revised policy set out as Appendix F.

8. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

- 8.1 There is a requirement for West Berkshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Council is required by national policy to set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs in the area, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities.
- 8.2 To provide the evidence to inform pitch provision, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has been undertaken. This is being carried out by an independent consultant, using a shared methodology with other Berkshire authorities. Duty to Cooperate work has been ongoing to date and will continue as the conclusions of the study are discussed further.
- 8.3 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has given initial information about the number of pitches required for the next 15 years. The study indicates a requirement for 14 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 24 for Travelling Showpeople.
- 8.4 A 'call for sites' for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was held between 28 April and 27 May 2014, which asked for suitable pitches to be identified. 5 sites were submitted during this process with an additional 4 sites included in the site assessment work. All sites were assessed in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS7. Regard has also been had to the relevant national guidance. A SA/SEA has been carried out on each site to determine the potential effects on social, economic and environmental sustainability.
- 8.5 The conclusions of this work were presented to Members at the Planning Policy Task Group Meeting on 27 June. This has led to preferred sites for consultation being selected. These are included as part of Appendix A.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 If Council considers that the draft Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document should be consulted upon, then the next steps will be for officers to invite comments on the draft document through an informal 7 week period of consultation.
- 9.2 It is proposed that the consultation takes place between 25 July and 12 September 2014 and is carried out in accordance with the Council's emerging Statement of Community Involvement.
- 9.3 Following the consultation, officers will prepare a publication version of the plan for Council in December 2014, which takes account of the comments received.

Appendices

Appendix A - Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

Appendix B – Background Paper – approach to the DPD

Appendix C - Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report **(electronically)**

Appendix D – Statement of Consultation **(electronically)**

Appendix E – background information to support policy on residential parking standards **(electronically)**

Appendix F – Technical information to support changes to policy CS3 of the Core Strategy (Sandleford Park) **(electronically)**

Appendix G – Equalities Impact Assessment.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: As part of the consultation

Officers Consulted: Paula Amorelli, Caroline Peddie, Sarah Conlon, Bryan Lyttle, Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/a