



◆ RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: REVISED GROWTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION

22 November 2021 to 17 January 2022

We're seeking your views on our Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy, which will be the blueprint for new homes, schools, roads, community and leisure facilities and other infrastructure across Wokingham borough for many years.

This revised proposal still protects the Green Belt and our countryside while concentrating development in a few places across the borough, removing the need for large-scale building elsewhere. It also prioritises tackling the climate emergency while providing affordable homes for local people.

Because we invited you to comment on our draft Local Plan last year, we're only consulting on aspects which have changed since then:

- We are no longer proposing a new town of about 15,000 new homes at Grazeley. This is not achievable following an extension of the emergency planning zone around AWE Burghfield to include that area.
- We suggest an alternative growth strategy which reflects preferences expressed in earlier consultations for most new development to be focused in carefully planned major new communities. This allows us to provide suitable, sustainable and high-quality infrastructure.
- Our revised approach includes a new strategic allocation to create a garden village with generous green space on land south of the M4, between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham, and additional housing within our existing major new development at South Wokingham.
- Additional smaller scale development is also proposed to support the vitality and viability of smaller settlements and provide opportunities for local people to stay in their communities.
- We're also looking to designate far more areas of Local Green Space than before so we're asking your thoughts on this.





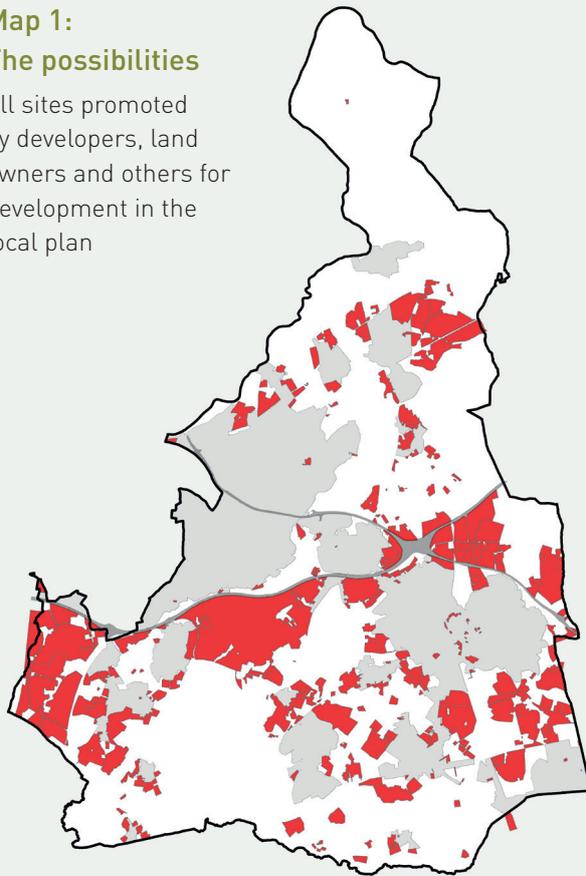
LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: REVISED GROWTH STRATEGY

MAPS

These maps show all the land that was proposed for potential development (left) and only the land that is actually being recommended for new homes and other development in the new Local Plan (right).

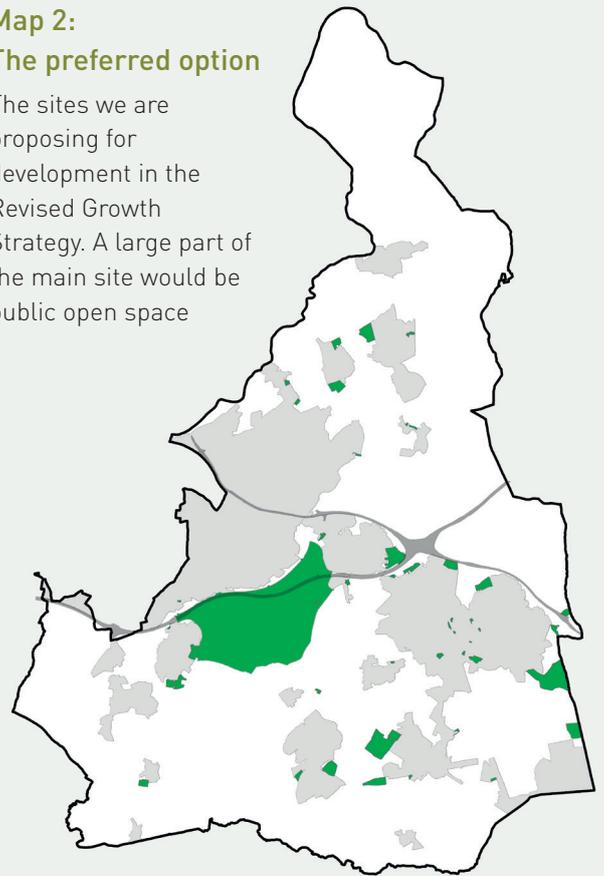
Map 1: The possibilities

All sites promoted by developers, land owners and others for development in the local plan



Map 2: The preferred option

The sites we are proposing for development in the Revised Growth Strategy. A large part of the main site would be public open space





As these maps illustrate, a new garden village south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham and additional housing at our South Wokingham major development would allow us to provide new homes by allocating fewer sites overall, protecting the vast majority of the borough.

The first of these would comprise about 4,500 homes, of which at least 2,200 would be built during the plan period to 2038.

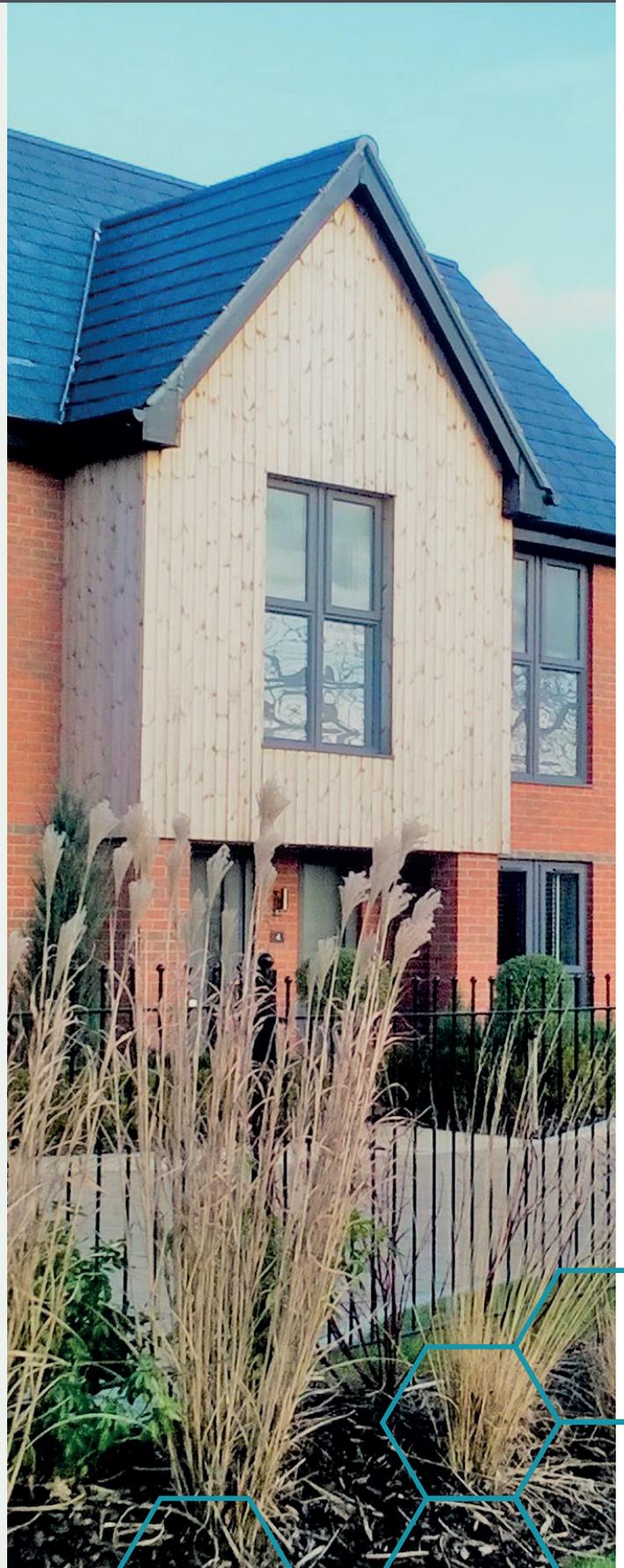
The addition to the South Wokingham major development would see just over 800 homes to the south of the railway line and Waterloo Road. This is in addition to the 2,500 dwellings allocated to South Wokingham in the current local plan. Under this proposed revision, Gray's Farm off Heathlands Road would be developed for outdoor and indoor sports and community uses.

To ensure a regular supply of new homes and the viability of our towns and villages, some smaller allocations are still needed elsewhere.

We therefore also propose about 2,700 new homes to be spread across 46 smaller sites, some of which were included in the previous consultation:

- 645 new homes in Wokingham town: 354 in existing major development areas and the remainder across the town centre
- 497 homes in Winnersh parish: includes 287 new homes at Winnersh Farms and 85 at Winnersh plant hire
- 429 homes in Barkham parish, includes 270 on Barkham Ride and most of the remainder at the former Reading FC training ground, which already has permission
- 381 new homes in Shinfield parish
- 200 new homes in Finchampstead parish
- 180 new homes in Twyford parish
- 139 new homes in Charvil parish

The remainder will be spread across the parishes of Arborfield and Newland, Hurst, Ruscombe, Sonning and Swallowfield





WHY WE HAVE TO PRODUCE A NEW LOCAL PLAN

There is a legal requirement for all local authorities to have planning policies in place to guide decisions on where development is supported, and where it is not. Wokingham Borough Council's current planning policies are still working to manage development, however they are intended to do this only to 2026. The new local plan – the Local Plan Update, will look further forward and ensure that our planning policies continue to be effective.

Without effective planning policies there would be no control or influence over where and how new housing and other types of development take place. This could lead to housing being allowed in poor locations, being of lower quality, and in places where infrastructure cannot be improved to help deal with the impacts such as pressures on roads, schools and community facilities. The lack of control and coordination is also likely to lead to more housebuilding across the borough which is developer driven.

Having a new Local Plan will allow Wokingham Borough Council to plan what infrastructure is built alongside the new homes – and to ensure that developers pay for these new roads, schools and other facilities.

BENEFITS of the previous local plan



SCHOOLS

Two new primary schools in South Wokingham, one in North Wokingham and two each in Shinfield and Arborfield
New secondary school in Arborfield

MAJOR ROADS

Arborfield Relief Road
Shinfield Eastern Relief Road
North Wokingham Distributor Road
South Wokingham Distributor Road
Winnersh Relief Road



PARKS & PLAY AREAS

Total of 240 hectares of new public open space
(that's the equivalent of about 330 football pitches)
40 new children's play parks
12.5 hectares of community allotments
Greenways network of 20 miles

COMMUNITY CENTRES

5 new community centres
Arborfield • Shinfield Village
Montague Park & Matthewsgreen in Wokingham
South Wokingham



SPORTS FACILITIES

£45 million on new sports facilities and improvements to existing facilities

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Nearly 2,000 new affordable homes at low rents and for shared ownership





LODDON VALLEY GARDEN VILLAGE



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LODDON VALLEY GARDEN VILLAGE

The Revised Growth Strategy includes a substantial garden village of about 4,500 homes, of which at least 2,200 would be built during the plan period to 2038, on land to the south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham. Of these, 35 per cent would be affordable housing for local people.

This area, known as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley, will accommodate a substantial amount of the borough's housing and employment needs in a sustainable way which responds to the challenges of climate change. This is one of the benefits of carefully planned large-scale development.

Providing new jobs is a central priority so the area near the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park will be earmarked for a range of science and technology, film studios, educational and health uses, including possibly the full or partial relocation of the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading.

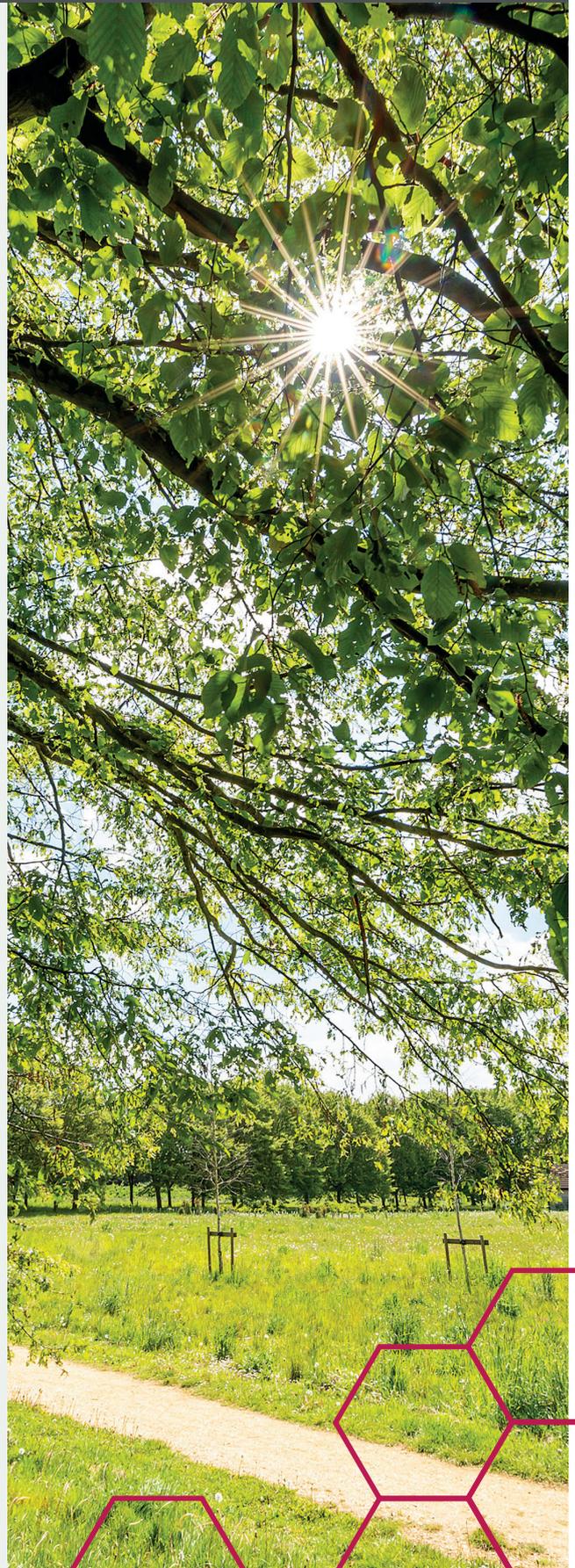
This new community would be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to incentivise sustainable travel, including new opportunities for walking and cycling both locally and further afield, including a new connection over the M4 to Earley.

We know that not all residents would work in the immediate area and some would need to commute longer distances. Nonetheless, this approach provides a better opportunity to reduce the need to travel compared to others.

As with our current local plan, residents would also benefit from high-quality new amenities including primary schools, a secondary school, sports facilities and neighbourhood centres.

The new village would include a major new public green space or park along the River Loddon valley, which offers a significant opportunity to improve biodiversity through restoring and enhancing habitats.

The Hall Farm / Loddon Valley site was one of three large scale developments considered, the others being land between the M4 and A329(M) to the north of Wokingham and land east of Twyford in Ruscombe parish. It was considered the most deliverable and sustainable option. For more information, visit the local plan update page on our website and click on the masterplanning tab.





WHAT ELSE IS IN THE LOCAL PLAN?

CHANGES SINCE THE PREVIOUS DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

LOCAL GREEN SPACE

We now propose designating over 60 areas as Local Green Spaces, which would protect them from development except under very special circumstances. The eight proposed designations in the earlier consultation all remain. We sought your views on this at the previous consultation resulting in more than 100 additional areas being nominated. Now we want to know what you think about the Local Green Spaces.

We propose to continue the broad approach set out in other policies in the draft Local Plan. This includes clear commitments to:

CLIMATE CHANGE:

By declaring a Climate Emergency, the council has committed itself to leading the drive toward carbon neutrality. The draft Local Plan seeks to make a full contribution to this by:

- Locating the majority of new homes needed in places that would reduce car dependency
- Requiring all new major development to be carbon neutral
- Supporting renewable energy creation where impacts are acceptable
- Requiring new development to achieve a 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity

VALUED LANDSCAPES

The draft Local Plan includes designation for places that have particular importance due to a combination of special features. Following an objective assessment, 11 places are designated as Valued Landscapes and six as having Urban Landscape Value in the draft plan.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Providing affordable housing is a priority for the council and the draft Local Plan reflects this by requiring up to 50 per cent affordable housing from all developments of five homes or more. This exceeds the national level recommended by the Government which suggests contributions from developments of 10 or more homes.

OTHER TOPICS

The Local Plan Update sets out our vision and a framework for how we will manage future development in the borough. The plan contains policies covering issues including where development should go; transportation and particularly sustainable and active transportation; the economy including jobs and retail; housing including a mix of the type and size of homes and housing for older and vulnerable people; architectural design, protecting our historic heritage and ensuring we build to sustainable standards; that we design to promote healthy and safe communities; and that we protect the natural environment, in particular protecting against flooding.

To learn more about the policies proposed in the draft Local Plan, see www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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Q. How many new homes are being planned for in the Local Plan Update?

A. About 5,700 in addition to those already allocated in our current local plan.

Q. Where will the new homes go?

A. The Loddon Valley garden village will provide a total of 4,500 homes, all within Wokingham borough, but not all of them will be built in the timeframe of the draft Local Plan. The added advantage is that some of these new homes will count towards the borough's quota for the next local plan period.

In the period to 2038, at least 2,200 homes could be built at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley with a further 800 in South Wokingham. However, to ensure we meet Government requirements, new homes will also come from the sites listed on page three and redevelopment, where suitable, within our towns and villages.

In this plan period (up to 2038):

- At least 2,200 new homes at Hall Farm / Loddon Valley and just over 800 at South Wokingham
- About 2,700 new homes at the sites listed on p3
- About 1,100 new homes that aren't allocated but we're expect to come forward through planning applications. This is an approximate forecast based on past trends.

Q. How have you decided on this Revised Growth Strategy - what analysis has taken place?

A. The council has invited landowners to put sites forward and assessed the suitability of each one, including extensive public consultation. Following the decision not to proceed with the scheme at Grazeley, we have reassessed ways in which we could manage development. All documents and the results of previous consultations are available on our website at

www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate

Q. Who will pay for all the infrastructure and facilities that need to be built with the new homes?

A. Almost all of the infrastructure and facilities would be paid for by developers through a community infrastructure levy for each house they build, which amounts to £47,000 per house on average.

Q. Will access to the countryside be lost due to development?

A. The Local Plan is about protecting open space by confining development to specific areas. If this draft is approved, it would bring vast new areas of open green space between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham into public use for the first time.

Q. The roads are already congested, so how will they cope with more traffic?

A. We recognise the importance of this to residents and the Revised Growth Strategy has been produced to help tackle congestion by creating a sustainable garden village with excellent potential public transport links so residents have a real alternative to the car.

Q. How will services such as schools and health cope with extra demand?

A. By planning new housing properly, ensuring developers pay for the facilities needed and seeking up-front infrastructure funding, the council would be able to ensure the new or expanded facilities necessary are in place as the new homes are built.

Q. Where can I find out more detailed information?

A. All the draft Local Plan documents are available online at www.engage.wokingham.gov.uk. This section includes a glossary to help you understand the different terms used.





HOW TO GET INVOLVED



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The public consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy will be open until 17 January 2022. The consultation is available on the council's new engagement website at engage.wokingham.gov.uk. This page also has links to key information about the Local Plan Update, including all of the background documents.

We will also be holding drop-in sessions for you to talk to officers and elected councillors about the Revised Growth Strategy and places must be booked in advance on our engagement site. These will be at:

Wokingham

St Crispin's School, Main hall

London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS
Monday, 22 November from 7pm to 9pm

Arborfield

Arborfield Green Leisure Centre

Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, RG2 9GB
Tuesday, 30 November from 7pm to 9pm

Online Information Sessions:

We are holding four online information sessions for those we are unable to attend the in-person events. For more information and to book your place, visit our Right homes, right places: local plan page at:

engage.wokingham.gov.uk

Thursday, 2 December 6 to 7pm

Thursday, 2 December 7.30 to 8.30pm

Monday, 6 December 6 to 7pm

Monday, 6 December 7.30 to 8.30pm

A recording of one of the meetings will be available for viewing on demand.

Comments on the Revised Growth Strategy must be submitted in writing by 5pm on Monday, 17 January 2022.

You can email LPU@wokingham.gov.uk or write to Growth and Delivery Team – Revised Growth Strategy Consultation, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

Copies are available to view on demand. Email us at LPU@wokingham.gov.uk or call **0118 974 6000**.

We will review all comments received, look at the key issues raised, and take these into account in working to the next stage of our new Local Plan.

