



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

◆ RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACES

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION

We are seeking your views on the draft Local Plan, which will be the blueprint for development in Wokingham Borough in the years ahead.

The draft Local Plan places climate change, the protection of countryside and of the environment, and local values at the heart of its strategic vision for the future.

Among the key points set out in the plan are:

- We are arguing for a lower housing requirement than that required by government policy.
- The draft plan protects the Green Belt and our countryside, and concentrates development in only a few places across the borough, removing the need for large scale building elsewhere.
- We are proposing a new Garden Town at Grazeley that would be designed and built to cutting-edge environmental standards with sustainable transport links into Reading and massive investment in facilities such as schools and community centres, sporting and health facilities and huge swathes of green space opened up for public use.

The consultation on the draft Local Plan will run until 20 March 2020 and is available at

www.wokingham.gov.uk/consultations.

Please read this document and any of the more detailed information available by searching Local Plan Update on our website www.wokingham.gov.uk before giving us your views.





THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN



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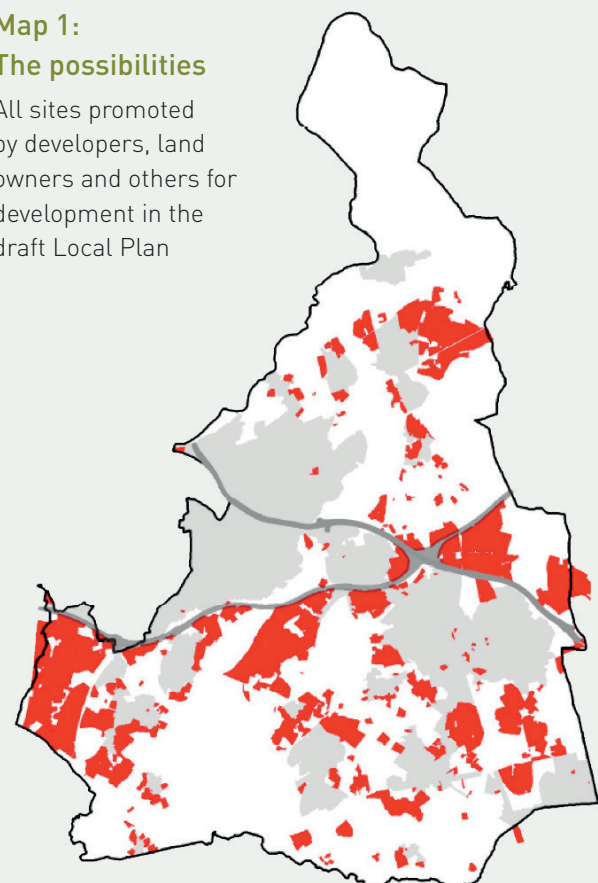
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MAPS

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).

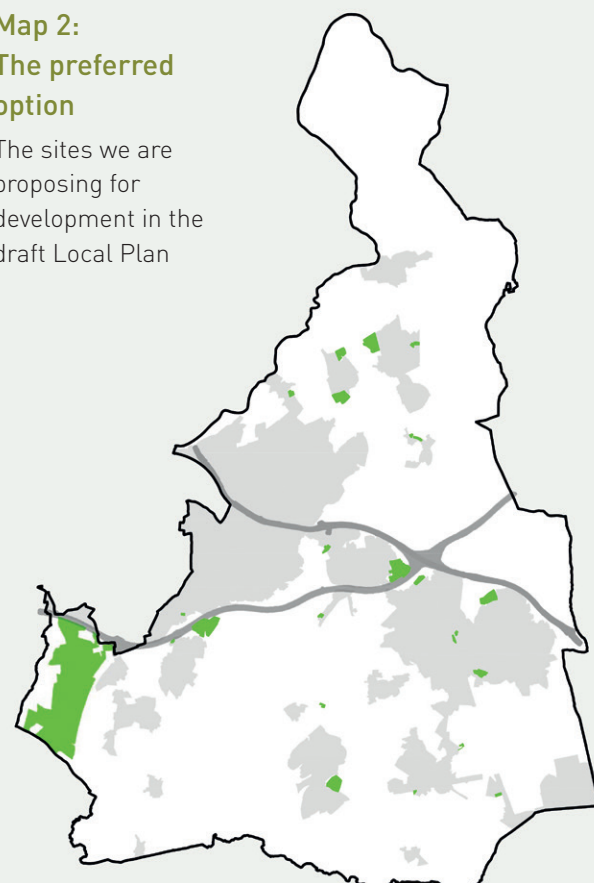
Map 1: The possibilities

All sites promoted by developers, land owners and others for development in the draft Local Plan



Map 2: The preferred option

The sites we are proposing for development in the draft Local Plan



As these maps illustrate, by focussing on a new Garden Town at Grazeley, the draft Local Plan would allow us to provide the homes we need by allocating only a few other sites for development in this local plan and beyond – with the vast majority of the borough protected.

In order to have a regular supply of new homes and to ensure the ongoing viability of our towns and villages, some small housing allocations are therefore included in the draft Local Plan.

The additional small housing sites earmarked in the plan are:

- 468 new homes in Wokingham town: 267 in existing major development areas, 101 by the train station and 100 in the town centre
- 329 new homes in Winnersh parish, including 35 adjacent to the North Wokingham development area and 24 self-build homes
- 160 new homes in Charvil parish
- 150 new homes in Twyford parish
- 155 new homes in Barkham parish, including 15 Gypsy and Traveller pitches

There are an additional 99 new homes including 9 Gypsy and Traveller pitches spread across the parishes of Finchampstead, Hurst, Ruscombe, Shinfield and Sonning.





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.

INFRASTRUCTURE from the last local plan



SCHOOLS

7 Primary & 1 Secondary

New primary schools at Montague Park, Matthewsgreen and 1 more in Wokingham, and 2 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



GRAZELEY GARDEN TOWN PROPOSAL



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GRAZELEY GARDEN TOWN

The draft Local Plan includes a proposed garden town of substantial scale (approx. 15,000 homes) planned from concept to completion with its own unique identity on land within Wokingham Borough, West Berkshire District and Reading Borough.

The draft Local Plan does not set all the details but it envisages Grazeley Garden Town being an infrastructure rich development which would, subject to masterplanning, include:

- Two new secondary schools
- Seven new primary schools
- A health hub
- Improved access to the train stations at Green Park and Mortimer, and longer term a new station at Grazeley itself
- Dedicated public transport links into Reading town centre
- Sport and leisure facilities and substantial green space

Wokingham Borough Council has jointly bid for £252million of forward funding from the Government that would, if successful, allow many of these facilities to be built at the start of the development – ahead of the housing.

Grazeley Garden Town would also be designed to protect the environment, with eco-friendly homes in a sustainable community that would have dedicated public transport links into Reading town centre and to the south, as well as to local facilities and employment opportunities.

With Grazeley Garden Town able to provide almost all of the additional housing that is needed across the borough in the years up to 2036 and beyond, the council would be better able to resist speculative housing sites that have been put forward by developers elsewhere.





WHAT ELSE IS IN THE LOCAL PLAN?

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

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.

LOCAL GREEN SPACE

Local Plans now provide an opportunity to designate Local Green Space (LGS). This gives communities the opportunity to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. The draft plan proposes eight areas for LGS designation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Providing affordable housing is a priority for the council and the draft Local Plan reflects this by requiring 35% affordable homes 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 draft Local Plan?

A. About 6,500 – the rest of the homes are those already allocated in a previous local plan.

Q. Where will the new homes go?

A. Grazeley Garden Town will provide 10,000 homes within Wokingham Borough, but not all of them can be built in the timeframe of the draft Local Plan. So, Grazeley Garden Town has the added advantage of futureproofing the borough for the next local plan period.

In the period to 2036 around 3,750 homes could be built at Grazeley Garden Town. 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 2036):

- About 3,750 new homes at Grazeley Garden Town
- About 1,350 new homes at the sites listed on p3
- About 1,400 new homes that aren't allocated but that we expect to come forward through planning applications (this number is based on historic trends and future assumptions)

Q. How have you decided on this draft Local Plan – what analysis has taken place?

A. The council has carried out extensive public engagement to shape the draft Local Plan over the past three years, including a consultation on the suitability of the sites promoted by developers, land owners and others. We have spoken with the town and parish councils to ensure our vision for the borough aligns as far as possible with the visions of our towns and parishes. We have also conducted an assessment of all sites, a strategic flood risk assessment, a green belt study, a landscape character assessment update and masterplanning work for the larger and more complex sites. All documents are available 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, currently set at £47,000 per house on average. In addition to this, the council has jointly bid for £252million of forward funding from the Government that would, if successful, allow much of these facilities to be built at the start of the development – ahead of the housing.

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

A. The Local Plan is about protecting open space by controlling development to specific areas. If this draft is approved it would bring vast new public open space in and around Grazeley Garden Town into public use.

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 draft Local Plan has been produced to help tackle congestion by creating a sustainable garden town 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.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate. 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 draft Local Plan will be open until 20 March 2020. The consultation is available on the council's website at: www.wokingham.gov.uk/consultations. This page also has a link to the Local Plan Update page which has all of the background documents.

We will also be holding drop-in sessions for you to talk to officers and elected councillors about the draft Local Plan. These will be at:

Grazeley

Grazeley Village Memorial Hall

Church Lane, Grazeley, RG7 1LD
Wednesday, 26 February from 7 to 9pm

South/East

St Crispins School, Sixth Form Atrium

London Rd, Wokingham RG40 1SS
Monday, 2 March from 7 to 9pm

North

Oakwood Centre, Woodley

Headley Road, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 4JZ
Tuesday, 10 March from 7 to 9pm

Daytime

Dinton, Activity Centre conference room

Sandford Lane, Hurst RG10 0SU
Thursday, 5 March from 10am to 1pm

