

Local Plan Update: Issues and Options Consultation Outcomes.

Cllr Ruffell, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Environment

Report to	Economic Planning and Housing Committee
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	No
Appendix 1:	Summary of responses received to Issues and Options Consultation
	National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
Papers relied on:	Planning Practice Guidance
	BDBC Local Plan Update: Issues and Options consultation material

Foreword - Cllr Ruffell, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Environment

The report provides feedback on the recent Issues and Options consultation. I am pleased that so many stakeholders took the time to respond to the consultation and help to inform the Local Plan at this early stage. The outcomes provide a sound basis for developing the Plan, highlighting key issues and concerns to our residents and businesses.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- The contents of this report are noted.
- Any views on the outcomes of the consultation and next steps expressed by the Committee are considered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Environment in the development of the draft Local Plan Update.

Background, corporate objectives and priorities

The considerations outlined in this report support the delivery of each of the Council Plan (2020-2024) priorities, namely planning for the future, protecting and enhancing our environment, and strengthening communities. More directly, it supports the following priorities:

- *Supporting local communities;*
- *Improving air quality;*
- *Improving river and landscape quality;*

- *Promoting more sustainable and better transport options and connections;*
- *Shaping high quality sustainable communities;*
- *Well-designed, well-built homes; and*
- *Supporting jobs and business growth*

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
ALP	Adopted Local Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LPU	Local Plan Update
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance

Main considerations

1 Executive Summary

1.1 From September to November 2020 the council held an Issues and Options consultation to inform the Local Plan Update (LPU). The non-statutory consultation asked for views on a number of identified key planning issues facing the borough over the next Local Plan period (to at least 2039) and potential options to address them. The consultation provided all stakeholders with the opportunity to shape the plan at an early stage and an extremely high response rate was achieved. This report provides a summary of the feedback received during the consultation. It also sets out the next steps for the LPU process.

2 The Proposal

2.1 The first major public consultation on the LPU concluded in late 2020. The non-statutory consultation focused on key issues and options for the update. The consultation was carried out in line with the interim Statement of Community Involvement (2020) and included the following:

- Publication of key documents on the council website and the use of the dedicated Local Plan consultation portal.
- Direct email consultations to all those on the Local Plan database (includes Town and Parish Councils, local amenity societies, statutory and technical consultees, landowners and members of the public).
- Ongoing engagement with relevant statutory providers such as Hampshire County Council

- A social media campaign to promote the consultation and press releases/articles in the local
- A specific one page spread in Basingstoke and Deane Today outlining key aspects of the consultation
- Virtual meetings with the majority of town and parish councils associated with Neighbourhood Planning, to discuss potential implications.
- Virtual duty to co-operate meetings with all neighbouring LPAs to identify relevant issues for further consideration and discussion.
- Direct questionnaire to key service and infrastructure providers on implications of future growth.

2.2 A very high response rate was achieved, especially given the early and non-statutory nature of the consultation when stakeholders are often less engaged. Approximately 1,700 responses were received from a variety of interested parties ranging from statutory consultees; town and parish councils; residents groups and individuals; local businesses; neighbouring local authorities; planning agents; infrastructure providers; councillors; landowners and developers. In addition to comments on the options set out, a number of landowners and developers also took the opportunity to submit additional details on sites already promoted for allocation through the LPU process. A number of new sites (9 in total) were also promoted at Tadley, Bishops Green, Dummer, Cliddesden, Upton Grey and Mortimer West End. Details of the new sites are available to view on the Council's website alongside other information on the outcomes of the consultation.

2.3 Attached to this report is an overview summary of the responses received, ordered by topic area (Appendix 1). A detailed summary will also be made available to view on the council's website, for those with a more in depth interest in the issues being considered. This latter summary also includes more references to comments made by particular organisations and groups. All of the original representations submitted in response to the consultation will also be available to view in full on the council's website.

3 Key Issues Highlighted Through the consultation

3.1 Key points made through the consultation are drawn out in the following sections. A summary of outcomes relating to each of the different consultation documents is included.

Issues and Options Consultation Document

Key Issues for the LPU

3.2 The consultation document identified seven key issues for the LPU:

- Tackling the climate emergency
- Focusing on place shaping and design
- Protecting and enhancing our environment and heritage
- Meeting the changing needs of all
- Providing the right housing

- Facilitating infrastructure delivery
- Supporting the economy and town/district centres

3.3 Results of the consultation show a high level of agreement on the key issues identified, and from a broad range of respondents including parish councils, statutory consultees and interest groups. The focus on climate change was particularly supported with many seeing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the increased use of renewable energy as fundamental to the LPU. This was highlighted alongside a high number of comments raising the need to also ensure a focus on housing delivery to meet needs, with many stressing the importance of restoring and maintaining a five year housing land supply. Concerns over rising housing numbers were expressed.

3.4 Other issues that respondents felt were important for the LPU included:

- Maintaining the rural identify of the borough and the character of rural villages, including the need to maintain effective strategic gaps
- Responding to issues arising from current events including the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, such as an increased emphasis on living and working more locally and the future of employment space
- The importance of green spaces in supporting physical activity, health and wellbeing
- Giving a higher status to wildlife and biodiversity, and recognising the need to protect valued landscapes
- Supporting the role of communities in planning
- Focusing on sustainability and a well co-ordinated movement strategy that promote alternatives to the car.

3.5 More detailed comments on the individual key issues can be seen in appendix 1. It is important to note though that many respondents recognised that the highlighted issues are not mutually exclusive and therefore achieving one aim may result in a negative impact on another. The need to focus on planning issues in the Local Plan was also highlighted by some statutory consultees, rather than extending beyond the boundaries of what a Local Plan should consider.

Climate Change (including transport)

3.6 There was strong support for the LPU to go beyond current requirements, although it was recognised by many that policies need to be realistic, proportionate, viable and therefore deliverable. There was also recognition, particularly from the development industry, of the Government's consultation on proposed changes to Building Regulations regarding proposed uplifts to energy efficiency standards and the proposed Future Homes Standard. Policies may need to be flexible to allow for future policy changes and arising cumulative implications resulting from the government's approach to this issue. The desire to be proactive was highlighted by support for:

- uplifting energy standards for new homes, beyond the current building regulations;

- introducing a requirement for non-residential buildings to achieve a BREEAM standard;
 - maintaining the current Local Plan's water efficiency standards which are above those in building regulations and, if possible, going beyond these. Support for a change from 110 litres or less per person per day to 100 litres was expressed by the relevant water companies;
 - the introduction of a policy on design measures that would mitigate climate change, support adaption, and embed sustainable design requirements;
 - identifying areas for renewable and local carbon sources through the Local Plan, supported through neighbourhood plans where suitable;
 - encouraging connection to district heat network where opportunities to do so have been identified and are viable;
 - battery storage and associated infrastructure, where this is considered to be of a suitable scale.
- 3.7 The council has commissioned consultants WSP to undertake a study that will provide an evidence base to deliver the aspirations outlined in the council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy. This will provide evidence to support policies on sustainable new homes and commercial buildings, and also the delivery of low and zero carbon energy. The findings of this work are due to be considered by the LPU Member Advisory Panel and members of this Committee later in March.
- 3.8 The consultation included a number of questions specific to transport issues which are directly related to the climate change agenda. Outcomes included:
- a split in support regarding the most favourable option for transport and movement, but with greater support for improvement for walking, cycling and public transport and an approach that sees improvements that benefit all modes of transport. There was a recognition that growth will need to be supported by a package of measures which reflect local situations and requirements
 - general support for the principle of a park and ride facility, if suitably located
 - wide support for travel solutions which promoted alternatives to the car, including MRT, trams, buses and meaningful routes for e-bikes/e-scooters
 - majority support for a new transport hub by Basingstoke Railway Station, with a focus on the use of sustainable design principles and electric vehicles

Creating Beautiful Places

- 3.9 There was a considerable amount of agreement with the list contained within the issues and options document regarding design priorities for the borough (nearly 200 respondents) although a number of those representing the development industry highlighted concerns about new policies being overly prescriptive and therefore lacking flexibility to take account of site-specific

circumstances. It was stated that this could, in turn, negatively affect the ability of developers to deliver schemes quickly and viably (for example through the use of standard housing types). It was suggested that the council could rely on national guidance, with policies focusing on specific design requirements on allocated sites. Other issues which were identified included the need for more and better integrated natural environment related features such as street trees into new developments, the impact of highway related issues such as parking and pedestrian/cycle paths, and the need to consistently achieve sustainable design.

- 3.9 A number of views on how the listed design priorities should be achieved were received including support for the use of design codes. It was considered that these could build on published guidance and would benefit from increased dialogue with local communities and the development industry. The continued use of Supplementary Design Guidance was favoured by some. The question of suitable densities was also highlighted, raising the issue of whether density policies should be included in the Plan. It was suggested that policies could be used to set minimum densities which reflect the character of local areas including villages, in line with national guidance.
- 3.10 The consultation included a question on whether the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) should be included as a policy requirement in the LPU. The vast majority of respondents agreed and some felt that policies should go further in light of the standards being a minimum. Some representatives of the development industry (although NDSS were supported by a number of developers) highlighted the need to have appropriate evidence in order to be able to adopt the standard whilst viability was raised as a concern. There was also some support for the use of a Home Quality Mark or similar mechanisms for recognising/encouraging high quality design and construction, although concerns were again raised by the development industry. There was widespread support for improving design quality in a general sense. The need for the LPU to deliver safe and healthy communities was supported by many respondents including statutory consultees such as Natural England and Sport England.

Developing a Spatial Strategy

- 3.11 Whilst the consultation did not specifically ask for views on the suitability or otherwise of promoted sites, it did ask a number of questions about spatial matters and where future development could be appropriately located. It listed a number of key elements of the current Local Plan approach such as optimising brownfield/urban sites; protecting and regenerating key economic assets; allocating a mix of suitable and deliverable sites for housing development and protecting the borough's natural and historic environment. These were broadly supported (75 representations) although a different emphasis was placed on varying issues depending on the interests of the respondent. 166 representations highlighted a broad range of more specific

aspects to be addressed through the LPU, including an emphasis on protecting valued landscapes and wildlife habitats, supporting regeneration and adapting to behavioural and economic changes.

- 3.12 There was general support, from those that responded on the issue, for more new homes being delivered in Basingstoke town centre provided the approach is carefully considered and subject to there being ongoing demand for town centre living. The importance of ensuring high standards in terms of quality, design and space was emphasised, as was the importance of green infrastructure in more urban environments. There was also general support for the principle of high-density development in suitable locations in the borough, such as the town centre and in areas with good public transport links. Respondents were split over the suitability of tall buildings in Basingstoke and also the introduction of minimum density standard which could be used as a policy tool to uplift the density of residential developments in suitable parts of the borough and ensure the efficient use of land.
- 3.13 Whilst a brownfield first approach will be a guiding principle for the LPU, given the level of development required over the Plan period, a number of options were set out in the consultation regarding the suitability of different locations for future greenfield development. Options included a focus on Basingstoke Town, increasing levels of growth at sustainable settlements and the creation of a new settlement. A variety of views were submitted with no option being clearly favoured. Many respondents highlighted the need for a balanced approach, with a focus on Basingstoke as the most sustainable location but with rural areas accommodating suitable levels of growth to meet needs. Respondents were split on a suitable level of development for the borough's rural areas, with some considering that such areas should take a larger proportion than in the current Local Plan, whilst others felt they had taken too much growth already. A number of respondents highlighted that the most effective approach to delivering the required levels of housing was to ensure that a variety of sites are allocated, both in terms of size and location. Whilst the benefits of large strategic sites were highlighted by some (reflecting the increased longer term certainty and infrastructure provision that such sites can bring) others felt that an over reliance on such sites in the current Local Plan had increased pressure on rural areas, and therefore deliverability was key to any future strategy. The need for reserve sites or the over provision of allocation sites was raised to ensure flexibility. The concept of a new settlement was supported by some but as part of a mix of sites to ensure on-going delivery.
- 3.14 Using the outcomes of the settlement study (see paragraph 3.43 for more details), the consultation put forward a suggested categorisation of settlements in the borough, based on their size and function. There was broad support for the suggested approach of placing settlements in categories (57 respondents) and also the categorisation itself (49 respondents), with many agreeing that focusing growth on the most sustainable settlements is the

correct approach in planning terms and that the level of growth should reflect the level of sustainability. Some felt that consideration should also be given to the potential for settlements to move up the categories if new infrastructure was provided in association with growth. The quality of services and facilities, rather than just the presence of them, was also considered important. Some respondents, including both parish councils and developers, suggested that certain settlements should be moved to a different category and this will be considered further in updating the settlement study work.

- 3.15 In light of the categorisation of settlements, the consultation suggested new Settlement Policy Boundaries (SPB) for five settlements, namely Bishops Green, Ecchinswell, Headley, Highclere and Silchester. 24 respondents agreed with the proposals as long as local communities were involved in the delineation. However, no responses were received on the matter from the relevant parish councils and officers will follow this up with direct approaches to the settlements affected. When asked about the suitability of future growth at Tadley, most respondents suggested that some limited growth should be focused at Tadley, given its relative sustainability, but that due regard had to be given to the constraints associated with the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Tadley Town Council stated that there should not be any additional development apart from small scale affordable housing for local people within the existing SPB.
- 3.16 Of those answering the question, most respondents (50 representations) agreed with the factors listed in the consultation for determining suitable levels of growth in settlements. These included levels of housing need, infrastructure capacity and amount of recent or planned development. In relation to development outside of settlements, a number of stakeholders expressed the view that LPU policies should enable windfall developments outside of delineated built up areas, such as infill development or small rural sites, where schemes would be proportionate in scale. This would be in addition to the current SS6 approach.
- 3.17 A number of options were also set out regarding the future role of neighbourhood plans in delivering future housing growth. There was no consensus on the most suitable role for such Plans in directing growth in local areas, suggesting that a flexible approach may need to be used, depending on the aspirations of a particular community. The LPU could allocate sites where there is no local appetite to address housing delivery through neighbourhood planning. Some suggested that, in order to maintain a five-year housing land supply, the LPU may have to intervene in terms of reviewing SPBs and allocating sufficient sites to meet the requirement.

The Economy

- 3.18 The current Local Plan designates a number of Strategic Employment Areas (SEAs) where employment uses are generally protected. Whilst there was

some support for the potential options of both retaining the SEAs unchanged and reallocating one or more to other uses, the strongest support was expressed for reallocating parts of existing SEAs for other uses (over 140 representations). This primarily reflected potential structural changes to the economic landscape in light of Covid-19. A number of areas were suggested for deallocation, focusing on the more dated and less successful employment areas that could potentially be more appropriate for residential use. The opportunity to create new employment areas as part of new developments was raised, in addition to the potential to locate employment in existing town and district centres.

- 3.19 In terms of office use, respondents generally considered that such development should be focused in existing office areas or the town centre, especially in light of falling requirements following Covid-19 and the emphasis on homeworking which could have a significant impact on the demand for new floor space. Whilst there was no clear favoured option regarding locations for future industrial uses, there was a focus on ensuring such uses were planned sensitively and in light of neighbouring land uses, for example on existing suitable employment sites. Again, there was no real favoured approach for storage and distribution although it was generally considered that these ought to be allocated on the edge of Basingstoke, away from homes and with good access to the strategic highway network.
- 3.20 General support was expressed for including a policy in the LPU which enables economic development proposals to come forward to address needs not currently identified, for example as a result of technological changes. A flexible approach was therefore advocated. There was also support for policies to promote homeworking and local hub provision, and to improve local broadband infrastructure. Whilst the importance of Basing View to the borough's economy was recognised, most respondents (approximately 150) expressed a preference for a flexible policy approach to the uses permitted in the SEA, including retail and residential uses. In addition, respondents expressed support for the current Local Plan's approach to the rural economy, although some felt the plan could go further to help the rural economy thrive. The majority of those who commented on tourism, advocated greater policy support for the borough's tourism sector, including providing a framework for suitable expansion and diversification.
- 3.21 The council has recently commissioned an Economic Needs Assessment to consider how business needs will be met over the Plan period in light of local circumstances and market conditions.
- 3.22 In terms of retail, the current hierarchy included in the Adopted Local Plan, which reflects the roles and functions of existing centres, was broadly supported although concerns about the impact of Covid-19 and current uncertainties were expressed. There was also general support for replacing out of centre retailing with other uses, although this approach should not apply

to local shops which should retain policy protection as essential services. The consultation asked for views on the future role of Basingstoke Town Centre and it was identified that a strong town centre first policy was needed to ensure it remained the focus for retail, social infrastructure, and cultural/leisure uses. The importance of an informed understanding of post Covid-19 shopping and working patterns, in addition to recent changes to permitted development rights, was raised. There was also an emphasis on being visionary, allowing a greater mix of uses, improving connectivity and offering something unique. In terms of regenerating the Leisure Park there were mixed views on potential options, ranging from support for increased leisure uses to more mixed-use development. Concerns about the potential impact of any development at the Leisure Park on Basingstoke town centre were highlighted.

- 3.23 A Retail Assessment was completed in 2020 that assessed the future need for retail and other 'main town centre uses' such as commercial leisure. The study was informed by a household survey that provided information on local shopping patterns, and other survey work including assessments of each of the borough's centres. The study identified a decrease in the need for retail floorspace over the plan period, and the importance of having a flexible strategy that could enable non-retail uses to be accommodated in existing centres, including Basingstoke town centre. The survey work was undertaken before the current Covid-19 pandemic and will need to be revisited in due course. However, it provides useful data to inform the council's response to the pandemic. The study will also help to inform work currently being undertaken relating to Basingstoke town centre.

Natural and Historic Environment

- 3.24 A number of questions on strategic gaps were included in the consultation. There remains a general support for a gaps approach in the LPU, to prevent coalescence and retain the distinctive character and integrity of settlements, although several respondents oppose the designation as it prevents new development on the edge of settlements. A number of new gaps were proposed along with amendments to existing gaps, whilst none were suggested for deletion. Officers will consider the suitability of the submitted proposals, taking into account available evidence.
- 3.25 There was also significant support (over 100 representations) for designating Local Green Spaces (LGS) through the LPU and neighbourhood plans, with a number of parishes outlining how neighbourhood plans are already successfully using this approach. A large number of potential LGSs were put forward for designation, some with significant support such as sites in Whitchurch (over 450 representations) and these will be considered in light of national criteria and local evidence.

- 3.26 Concern was expressed about the deterioration in local water quality, with consequent impacts on biodiversity. There was support for measures to be taken to improve quality. There was also support for addressing the issue of achieving nutrient neutrality. Specific comments on flooding and infrastructure were provided from relevant consultees such as HCC, as Lead Local Flood Authority, and the water companies.
- 3.27 A Water Cycle Study to inform the LPU is currently being finalised, alongside a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The draft findings of the studies were considered by the LPU Members Advisory Panel and this committee in February 2020. Discussions with stakeholders including the Environment Agency and water companies will continue as the LPU process continues, to ensure that aims are met.
- 3.28 With regards to achieving higher biodiversity net gain, the majority of responses supported aiming for a more ambitious target than 10% net gain. However, some concerns were expressed about the potential impact of this approach on the viability and deliverability of developments. Whilst there were some reservations about the provision of biodiversity compensation measures off-site (priority should be given to achieving on-site), there were suggestions that partners, including the council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Natural England should work together to manage off-site contributions in a coherent strategy such as through Nature Recovery Networks. Many specific suggestions relating to protecting and improving biodiversity through the LPU were also received.
- 3.29 Other issues raised in relation to this topic included the view that mitigation and improvement to air quality should be recognised within the LPU as part of a sustainable approach to development and there is the expectation that the Plan will consider the impacts of air quality on the natural environment, particular in relation to traffic. A number of comments were also received regarding the importance of ensuring that future development does not have a detrimental effect on heritage assets including conservation areas, and that a positive approach to the historic environment should be an integral part of the LPU. Detailed guidance was received from Historic England.

Meeting Housing Needs

- 3.30 The consultation asked a number of technical questions regarding how to meet local housing needs, such as the amount of discount to be applied to rent levels and which low cost home ownership product could be most suitable in the borough. The detailed responses that were received will help to inform policy development moving forward. Most notably there was strong support for all policies to be informed by an up to date Housing Market Assessment (HMA), in line with national guidance.

- 3.31 In terms of the principles that should inform the types of housing products supported, the key theme was the need for flexibility to allow developments to respond to changing local housing needs; allow the location of development and site-specific characteristics to influence product type; and to provide a framework to accommodate new products that could arise in the future. Respondents generally recognised the importance of providing affordable housing in rural areas and the contribution that it made to the sustainability and vitality of rural communities and there was general support for the delivery of rural exception sites. The promotion of self-build development was supported but there was a split regarding the best option for delivery.
- 3.32 A number of questions were included regarding meeting the housing needs of specific groups. With regard to homes for older persons, responses were split between whether all homes should be built to advanced accessibility standards and whether a 20% requirement should be incorporated into policy. Similarly, support was split for the outlined options for specialist accommodation (i.e. through specific allocations, provision on wider housing allocations or through windfall) with some supporting a mix of all options, due to the scale and range of needs to be addressed. There was also no real preference for the proposed options regarding size and mix of market housing although respondents were generally seeking a balance of certainty and flexibility. Responses reflected different ways in which this could be achieved. Again, the main thrust was that policy requirements should be underpinned by evidence of local need. Lastly, there was a split regarding how the council should meet its requirement for gypsy and traveller pitches, with no clear favoured approach. Stand-alone allocations or the provision of pitches on larger housing sites were both supported. The relative benefits of the different options were expressed, which will help with future policy decisions.
- 3.33 A Housing Market Assessment was undertaken by HDH Planning and Development to inform the LPU in 2020 and initial findings have been discussed with members of this committee through the LPU Members Advisory Panel in late 2020. Detailed policy wording and approaches will be discussed as the Plan develops. A Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTNA) has also been commissioned and is due to be completed later in 2021. This will set out the level of need in the borough and inform the future strategy for meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers.

Providing New Infrastructure

- 3.34 The consultation asked a number of questions relating to the provision of new infrastructure. Respondents were asked to consider two general options: seek new ways to provide infrastructure to ensure its provision as early as possible in the delivery of new communities, through external funding and close working with key partners; or 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. Whilst there was strongest support for seeking new ways of providing infrastructure, some respondents supported continuing to plan for the timely provision of infrastructure or even a combination of the two.

- 3.35 Other infrastructure issues identified by respondents were wide ranging and related to transport infrastructure (including roads, pedestrian and cycle facilities, electric vehicles), railway access and passenger capacity, bus services, community facilities, health facilities including a new hospital, sports and leisure facilities, green infrastructure, water quality, supply and drainage capacity, broadband and 4G/5G coverage, and waste collection facilities.
- 3.36 With regards to large development sites, respondents highlighted the importance of strategic transport solutions, efficient and affordable public transport systems (including for rural areas), transport hubs integrated with community and education facilities, suitable local convenience stores, and opportunities for environmental gain.
- 3.37 When asked to identify local infrastructure issues, a large number of respondents (over 130) highlighted concerns relating to surface water flooding, highway capacity and air quality within Cliddesden and the surrounding area. With regards to Whitchurch Railway Station, many respondents (over 50) requested the deletion of Policy SS11 of the current adopted Local Plan) relating to the provision of additional station parking facilities which they considered to no longer be required. A number of other local concerns were received with respect to highway capacity, access to public transport, drainage capacity, access to schools, health and sports facilities, and a lack of railway station parking.

Infrastructure Questionnaire

- 3.38 The opportunity was taken at this early stage to seek views from key service and infrastructure providers on issues linked to future development. A range of responses was received including an expected need for:
- a new hospital/health campus to serve the Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's catchment;
 - new or replacement health facilities within Chineham and Winklebury;
 - improvements to the Barton Stacey wastewater treatment works serving St Mary Bourne and Hurstbourne Priors; and
 - gas supply reinforcements within Chineham and Hatch Warren.
- 3.39 Network Rail highlighted their ongoing work with the council in relation to Manydown, Station Approach and Basing View, as well as the potential need to accommodate further passengers in the future as the population increases.

3.40 Providers and operators recognised the importance of local plans as an evidence base for the planning of new infrastructure. Further engagement will be undertaken with providers and operators as work is progressed to develop the LPU’s supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan as well as the development of policy. This could include consideration of a specific policy to support the delivery and funding of health infrastructure. In addition, specific work has been commissioned on key infrastructure issues such as a Transport Assessment which will consider the impact of growth on the local and strategic highway network whilst considering the impacts of modal shift etc.

Promoted Sites

3.41 The greatest interest (and the highest number of representations) related to the sites that have been promoted to the council as having potential to accommodate future development. A large number of specific representations were made on sites across the borough, a full summary of which is available to view on the council website.

3.42 The sites which received the largest number of representations are outlined in the following table for general information only (sites with around 20 or more representations shown). Further information on sites is not outlined in this report as the suitability of sites will be considered by this committee in the summer, following further consideration of spatial approaches. The issues raised through the consultation will be recorded and considered through the detailed site assessment process, which will assess promoted sites against a comprehensive set of criteria both on an individual and cumulative basis. This work is underway and builds upon the developing evidence base including a Landscape Site Sensitivity Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The consideration of different spatial approaches will be informed by the initial outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal which will consider social, economic and environmental impacts of different strategies.

Promoted Site and SHELAA reference	No. of reps.	Key issues raised
Sites at Cliddesden (CLID001 to 10)	50+	Included scale of development and unsustainable location; adverse impact upon character, visual amenity and scenic quality of the local landscape; flood risk; impact on heritage and biodiversity; and impact on local infrastructure including local highway.
Upper Swalick Garden Village (CLID011)	381	Included size and scale of development; the impact upon landscape/rural character; the ability of the site to deliver in the LPU update period; the impact upon biodiversity and the natural environment including fauna, flora and woodland; impact on local villages and heritage; highway impact and increased traffic; and infrastructure constraints.

Wash Water (EW008)	32	Included loss of countryside and important green wedge; increased flood risk; adverse impact on wildlife and biodiversity; location within the AONB; impact on local infrastructure and lack of connection with settlements; highway impact and safety; and increased pollution.
Sites at Mapledurwell (MAP001 - 4)	22	Included impact on SSSI and valued high quality landscape; the sustainability of the sites; impact on the Conservation Area; lack of mains drainage; site specific factors including access and ground conditions and impact on the character of the settlement.
Sites as Nately Scures (NEW001-2)	Approx. 20	Included impact on the A30 and local roads; the sustainability of the sites; impact on heritage assets, rural sense of place, village character and tranquil rights of way; impact on wildlife corridors, chalk streams, SINC's and ancient woodland; and impact on local community facilities.
Site to the East of Basingstoke and Old Basing (OLD002 – 7)	19	Included impact on community facilities and infrastructure including local roads and the A33; the rural character of the area and impact on local village character; impact on landscape and biodiversity including the rivers Loddon and Lyde; and flood risk.
Sites at Upton Grey (UG002 - 3)	Approx. 85	Included unsustainable location; lack of infrastructure to support further development; impact on rural and landscape character, the conservation area and natural environment (SSSI); and lack of local housing need.
Sites at Whitchurch (WHIT008 (76 objections) WHIT009 (95 objections) and WHIT 010 (67 objections)	As listed and 455 on petition	Included impact on/loss of Whitchurch Cricket Club; loss of tranquil green space valued by the community; impact on heritage, landscape character and biodiversity (including River Test SSSI); flood risk; impact on local infrastructure and noise pollution
Land north of Whitchurch (WHIT013)	54 and 455 on petition	Included intrusion into the North Wessex Downs AONB; no need for development in the location include employment and car parking; distance from local facilities; impact on local infrastructure; impact on landscape and biodiversity.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

3.43 This sets out a framework for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of the LPU, both positive and negative. A minimal

number of responses were received on the proposed framework, the most notable of which was from Natural England which suggested some small scale technical updates. Comments were also made regarding the need to ensure, through the SA process, that the broad ranging impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic are considered in the Plan making process. Concerns were also expressed over the need for the SA to recognise the potential negative impacts of urban intensification and that brownfield development is not always the most sustainable option for future growth.

Draft Site Assessment Methodology

- 3.43 This document set out a proposed methodology for assessing the suitability of potential development sites for allocation through the LPU. Whilst the methodology was generally supported, issues raised included the need to ensure that the site assessment approach allows for the full consideration of promoted new settlements; that the cumulative benefits of larger sites is fully considered; and that suitable sites in smaller settlements are not automatically excluded based on the sustainability of a settlement, for example where strategic development could improve the overall sustainability of the village. Other highlighted issues included the need to focus on the deliverability of sites when assessing suitability and the need to recognise the importance of the role of Neighbourhood Plans in delivering growth.

Draft Settlement Study (Part 1):

- 3.44 Part 1 of the settlement study categorises the relative sustainability of the towns and villages in the borough, outside of Basingstoke. The methodology and suggested categorisation of settlements was generally supported through the consultation, although some limited re-categorisation was suggested by parish councils and site promoters. Concern was raised about development in villages close to Basingstoke, such as Oakley, given the level of development likely to be located at Basingstoke. Detailed comments were received highlighting factors to take into account in assessing sustainability, including proximity to settlements outside the borough and the quality as well as quantity of facilities and their ability to accommodate new growth. The potential for smaller villages and hamlets to accommodate small scale development was also highlighted as needing further consideration in light of national guidance which promotes sustainable development in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The comments will be considered in finalising Part 1 of the study. They will also help to inform the development of Part 2 which will consider local opportunities and constraints in the higher category settlements, taking into account relevant factors such as housing needs, infrastructure provision and available sites.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The outcomes of the consultation will be considered in detail as work on all aspects of the LPU continues, helping to inform future decision making. This includes helping to shape a spatial strategy for the borough up to at least 2039 which is both suitable and deliverable. The report indicates a number of evidence base studies either already completed or in the process of being so. The outcomes of such studies will continue to be discussed through the LP Members Advisory Panel, alongside policy development. Reports are due to be brought back to this committee in the summer regarding options for future growth and potential site allocations, drawing upon the available evidence base. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the timetable for the LPU, states that a draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) will be published for consultation in Winter 2021/22.

5 Options analysis

- 5.1 The council is progressing the LPU in line with the LDS which sets out the key milestones and timescales for the Local Plan process. The consultation raised a number of detailed options on a number of topics and the responses received will help to inform the assessment of those options and guide future policy making and the overall spatial strategy. The council could choose to not progress the LPU as a result of the current uncertainties related to the Government's proposals for the future of the planning system or other relevant issues such as the Covid -19 pandemic which is likely to have an impact on the options considered for the LPU. However, progressing the Plan in line with current statutory requirements will put the council in the most robust position moving forward. Central Government is strongly encouraging Local Planning Authorities to continue with plan making at this time.

Corporate implications

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Under [regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#) local planning authorities must review local plans at least once every five years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no current and direct financial implications arising from the report itself.

8 Risk management

- 8.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the council's risk management process and has identified no significant (Red or Amber) residual risks that cannot be fully minimised by existing or planned controls or additional procedures.

9 Equalities implications

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken during the Issues and Options consultation process for the LPU. This considered the impact of the proposed LPU on the protected characteristics groups and its implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). The assessment concluded that the plans for the LPU spatial strategy and policies would be positive for all groups who live, work and visit the borough.
- 9.2 The EIA was revisited after the public consultation and no issues were identified for any protected groups. All representations received during the consultation will continue to be considered throughout the LPU process, including through the consideration of options, the implementation of the LPU spatial strategy and policies. The EIA will be reviewed at each stage of the LPU process to consider the implications of the proposals on the protected characteristics and vulnerable groups.
- 9.3 If the proposed changes are adopted, they will need to be communicated in a wide variety of ways to ensure that residents and key stakeholders are aware of the policy changes and the spatial strategy set out in the LPU.

10 Consultation and communication

- 10.1 The Issues and Options consultation was carried out in line with the adopted Interim Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and received an extremely high response rate. All comments were received electronically, with approximately a third being received through the Local Plan consultation portal which is a significant increase in the use of this consultation tool. The outcomes of the consultation will be published on the council's website, with signposting to all those on the Local Plan database through direct contact emails. Outcomes will also be reflected in the next edition of the Local Plan newsletter. A number of meetings were held with interested parties during the consultation, including town and parish councils and also neighbouring authorities and this dialogue will continue as the LPU process progresses.

11 HR

- 11.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

12 Climate Change

- 12.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this update.
- 12.2 However, it is noted that there is strong support among respondents for policies within the LPU to tackle the climate emergency. These responses, taken in the context of the wider consultation, will inform and facilitate the development of suitable planning policies in the LPU that should reduce carbon emissions arising from development across the borough.

Conclusion

13 Summary and reason for the decision

13.1 The reports sets out some of the key responses made through the recent Issues and Options consultation for the LPU. Full details will be available to view on the council's website. The Committee is asked to consider the responses made in progressing decisions on the LPU as the process continues. Outcomes of the consultation, which raised a wide variety of opinions and views, will help inform all aspects of the LPU process including the spatial strategy and policy development.

14 The options considered and rejected

14.1 These options are outlined and considered in section 4 of this report.

Date: 4 March 2021

Decision taken by: Economic, Planning and Housing Committee

Lead officer	Ruth Ormella, Head of Planning, Sustainability and Infrastructure
Report author	Joanne Brombley – Planning Policy Manager Joanne.Brombley@basingstoke.gov.uk Ext. 2410
Version	Final
Dated	March 2021
Status	Open
Confidentiality	It is considered that information contained within this report (and appendices) do not contain exempt information under the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and therefore can be made public.