

Worthing Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation - May 2016

FAQs

What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan is a plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority (Worthing BC). When adopted, it guides decisions on whether or not planning applications can be granted.

Why does Worthing need a new Local Plan?

The current Development Plan (the Worthing Core Strategy) was adopted in 2011 and the intention was that it would help to guide development until 2026. However, it must now be reviewed to reflect latest national policy, particularly with regard to how local authorities now need to plan for housing. Whilst much of the work in the Core Strategy is still relevant the new Plan (to be called a Local Plan) now needs to look ahead to 2033 and work out the best places for new development to go.

It is a requirement for Council's to have an up-to-date Development Plan in place. Furthermore, without a new Local Plan there is a risk that the Council would lose a degree of local control of planning matters as the likelihood of speculative development proposals would increase.

What is this Issues and Options consultation about?

The Council is seeking views on how Worthing should grow and develop. This consultation document (called 'Your Town – Your Future') identifies the issues and challenges facing the borough and the options that could help address them. Unlike many other local authority areas spread over wide areas, there are only a limited number of development options in and around the town. We are therefore asking for views on how best to balance the delivery of growth and regeneration across the borough to meet future needs whilst at the same time protecting the things that are valued about the town.

What area will it cover?

The new Local Plan will cover most of Worthing Borough. However, unlike the existing Core Strategy, it will not cover the land in the north of the Borough that lies within the South Downs National Park. The National Park Authority is a planning authority in their own right and they are producing their own Local Plan which will set planning policy for all areas within the National Park boundary.

In line with the requirements of the duty to co-operate Worthing BC will work with partners and local authorities to consider a range of cross boundary issues.

What must the new Local Plan do?

Although the Local Plan will reflect local issues and choices it should be noted that there are also some important limitations as, in line with national policy, it must:

- take account of local strategies and national planning policies and their support for sustainable development;
- be based on an objective assessment of the borough's development needs;
- have regard to the various other strategies of the Council and its partners;
- take into account evidence of environmental constraints on development and the need to conserve the built and natural heritage;
- be supported by a Sustainability Appraisal.

What evidence informs the drafting of the Plan?

Local planning authorities must ensure that their Local Plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of their area. To meet this requirement the Council has commissioned or undertaken a range of studies which will be used to understand the characteristics, opportunities and constraints within the Borough. Further evidence will be collected as the new Local Plan is advanced. These, and other, studies which can be viewed on the Council's website, will support the emerging Local Plan: www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan

What progress has been made so far?

Following the Council's commitment to progress a new Local Plan work has focussed on working with key stakeholder to identify significant issues and updating key parts of the Council's evidence base. This includes:

- Housing Study - this assesses the level of housing need in the Borough
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - this assesses the capacity of land/sites within the Borough to meet housing needs.
- Landscape and Biodiversity Study
- Employment Land Review

Has the Council already decided what policies to include and which sites to allocate for development?

No - the Council is not, at this stage, proposing any policies or stating which sites it will be looking to allocate for development in the new Plan. No decisions have been made. With reference to key evidence, the Council is using this consultation to invite views on key issues, options and opportunities. The comments that are received will be given consideration when decisions are made on which policies to advance and which sites will be proposed for allocation/protection.

Has the Council determined how much new housing will be required through the new Local Plan?

The Worthing Housing Study (June 2015) concludes that the full Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in the Borough (2013-2033) is 636 dwellings per annum. This level of need, which is significantly more dwellings than are currently being delivered or that are planned for, is the main reason why the adopted Core Strategy is being reviewed and a new Local Plan is being developed.

The new Local Plan will need to balance this level of housing need (OAN) alongside other evidence to assess what level of development can be delivered in a sustainable manner when taking significant environmental, land availability and other constraints into account. Ultimately, it is this process that will establish the new housing requirement within the new Local Plan.

Can employment opportunities and infrastructure support additional growth?

Although the need to deliver housing growth will be a key focus as the Plan is progressed it is vital that the needs of other land uses (e.g. open space, employment, leisure, community facilities, retail etc) are not overlooked. Evidence will be prepared to inform these considerations and the need to balance the requirements of competing uses. The over-arching aim of the Plan will be to ensure that growth is delivered in a sustainable manner.

Why are greenfield sites being considered for development when there are previously developed sites that could be built on in Worthing?

The Council will continue to promote and encourage sustainable new housing on previously developed sites within the town. However, the Council's evidence (principally the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) and past trends clearly demonstrate that there are very few potential sites that could deliver significant levels of housing within the existing built-up area boundary.

As a consequence, and in light of the very high levels of housing need, the Council must test all potential opportunities to meet identified needs. This includes the greenfield sites listed in the consultation document. However, it is important to note that the inclusion of a site in this list at this stage in no way indicates the Council's intention to allocate or support development. It will be evidence, which can include consultation responses, that will be used to help determine which (if any) of these sites should be put forward for development in the draft Local Plan to be prepared in the coming months.

Where can I view a copy of the Issues and Options document?

The document, titled 'Your Town – Your Future', can be viewed using this link: www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan . Alternatively, hard copies can be viewed at the Council offices (Portland House) or at any of the libraries throughout the Borough.

How long is the consultation period?

The Issues and Options document will be published on Wednesday 11th May. The consultation period will last six weeks and will close on Wednesday 22nd June.

How has the Council informed people about the consultation?

The Council is keen to ensure that all interested parties are made aware of this consultation and have the opportunity to have their say on the future of the Borough. A variety of mechanisms have been used to advertise the publication of the consultation document including social media, local press, newsletters, workshops, briefings, leaflets and posters.

How do I make my comments?

Respondents are encouraged to fill in the **e-form** on the Council's website or email comments as these are the quickest and cheapest methods of replying. Alternatively comments can be sent by post. Responding means we will automatically notify you of future consultation exercises relating to the Local Plan.



Website: www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan

Email: worthinglocalplan@adur-worthing.gov.uk



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What happens after this consultation?

All representations received will be recorded and, where appropriate, the comments will help to inform the preparation of the Local Plan which will set out the preferred sites for new development such as housing, employment and other land uses as well as setting out draft policies for determining planning applications.

What is the timetable for Preparing the new Local Plan?

2015 / 2016	Developing the evidence base Issues and Options consultation
2016 / 2017	Draft Local Plan and supporting documents Preferred options consultation
2017 / 2018	Submission Local Plan consultation Formal submission Examination in public Formal adoption