



# WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## FAQ

### Regulation 18

October 2018



## 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 document (to be called a Local Plan), Worthing now needs to look ahead to 2033 and work out the best places for new development to go.

It is a requirement for Councils 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 'Worthing Draft Local Plan 2016 – 2033' consultation about?

The Council is seeking views on how Worthing should grow and develop.

We started this work some time ago. The first stage of consultation, the 'Issues and Options' stage was undertaken in 2016. That identified the issues and challenges facing the borough and the options that could help address them. We took views into account and did more work to inform the 'Worthing Draft Local Plan'.

This version of the Plan sets out the Council's preferred options to address the challenges. Unlike many other local authority areas spread over wide areas, there are only a limited number of development options in and around the town. This Plan seeks 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. It includes the proposed Spatial Strategy, potential site allocations, and a number of supporting Core Policies.

We need to know what you think. Your comments will help us decide on the publication version of the Plan (which will be the subject of a further consultation and then submitted for Examination in 2019/20).

## 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?

The Local Plan must provide the broad policy framework and a long-term strategy to manage development, promote regeneration, protect the environment, deliver infrastructure and support vibrant healthy communities within Worthing. 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:

- align and conform with European requirements and national policy, and take account of local strategies 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 and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## 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 continue to be collected as the Plan is advanced (for example, an updated 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment' and a 'Sport, Leisure and Open Space Study'). The evidence base can be viewed here: [www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan](http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan)

## What progress has been made so far?

We have worked with key stakeholders to identify significant issues and update important parts of the Council's evidence base. The evidence base 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.
- Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation needs Study
- Landscape and Biodiversity Study (including Local Green Space Designation study)
- Economic Research and Employment Land Review
- Retail and Town Centre Uses Study
- Worthing Local Plan Transport Study

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

The Council is firming up its views on what it thinks might work best. We have called this document a 'Worthing Draft Local Plan' because we are proposing policies and sites for development/protection, but we are open to evidence that may change our views. As yet no decisions have been made to definitely allocate sites, or to definitely exclude sites, and no policy is written in stone. This is your chance to give us more information. Feel free to agree with us or to challenge us if you think we can make the Plan better. 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 in the publication version of the Plan.

## **Has the Council determined how much new housing will be required?**

The National Planning Policy Framework now requires all local planning authorities to meet their full need for both market and affordable housing as far as that is consistent with other policies in the framework. The most up-to-date assessment of housing need (using the government's standard method at the time of writing and the housing projections published in September 2018) is 12,801 dwellings over the Plan period (to 2033) which is 753 dwellings per annum. This level of need is significantly more dwellings than is currently being delivered or planned for, and is the main reason why a new Local Plan is being developed.

The new Local Plan needs to balance this level of housing need alongside other evidence to assess what level of development can actually be delivered in a sustainable manner after taking constraints into account. It is very clear that there is no prospect of meeting *all* of Worthing's housing need in the borough as there is not enough land available. So the question is, taking a proactive approach, how much housing need can we meet? The Council has considered the availability of land, its type and location, and issues such as flood risk, biodiversity, accessibility, landscape and infrastructure capacity. Ultimately, this process has established the new housing requirement for Worthing of 4,182 dwellings over the plan period (which is 246 dwellings per annum).

It is worth noting that the housing need figure may change between now and the publication Plan to reflect updated information. Ultimately, after considering all the evidence, it is a government Inspector who will decide whether the Council has struck the 'right balance' when determining how much of this need can be delivered.

## **Can employment opportunities and infrastructure support additional growth?**

Although the delivery of housing provides a key focus of this Plan, it is vital that other uses such as commercial, community and leisure facilities are not overlooked. The Spatial Strategy specifies a number of development sites to contribute towards meeting these needs and policies in Part 4 of the Plan also seek to protect and improve these uses.

Similarly, the strategy is to plan positively for sustainable economic growth, promoting and enhancing the economic role of the town, and guiding its role within the wider sub-region. The Worthing Economic Research and Employment Land Review highlighted the need to retain employment premises and land in the borough, and to provide 14,000 sqm of office space and 40,000 sqm of industrial floorspace over the Plan period.

The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study estimates that the following should be provided to 2026 (which isn't quite the whole Plan period): 9,200 sqm of comparison floorspace (non-food) and 1,250 sqm of convenience retail (food).

As with housing, the lack of suitable development sites around the borough means that the delivery of the employment and commercial needs identified in these studies will be challenging. However, the Spatial Strategy identifies a number of development sites for mixed use, and Decoy Farm provides an opportunity to deliver a significant extension to the town's main

industrial estate. In summary, the plan establishes a clear policy framework 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 continues to promote and encourage sustainable new housing on previously developed sites within the town. A number of 'urban' sites that were assessed through the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and listed on the Council's Brownfield Register are considered to be available, viable and suitable for development and these make up an important part of the Council's housing land supply. These include:

- 4 significant sites that are suggested allocations (A) in this plan because they provide the greatest opportunity to deliver residential and wider regeneration objectives;
- 6 Areas of Change (AOCs) which are urban regeneration sites that have a less certain delivery timeframe. This may be because existing uses need to be relocated, or they are economically more challenging to develop (which often brings into question what mix of use would work and whether the overall capacity which would make the site viable is sustainable);
- the expectation that small sites (under 10 dwellings) and windfall sites (sites that unexpectedly become available) will all contribute to meeting housing need.

However, the Council's evidence 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 level of housing need, the Council has tested all potential opportunities to meet housing need.

Although the Council has been positive in its approach when reviewing options within the town it was very clear at an early stage that there was no prospect of all of Worthing's identified housing need being met within the existing Built Up Area Boundary. For that reason, the Council has also suggested allocating 3 edge of town greenfield sites:

- Caravan Club
- Land West of Fulbeck Avenue
- Land at Upper Brighton Road

(Note that Decoy Farm may look 'green' but it is actually a former landfill site and so counts as a brownfield Allocation).

There are a further three greenfield sites that are under consideration but at this stage not supported for allocation - these are the omission sites (OS):

- Land east of Titnore Lane
- Land north of Beeches Avenue
- Worthing United Football Club.

New evidence may result in suggested allocations being removed, or omission sites being allocated – for example, improved access arrangements and relocation of Worthing United Football Club to an appropriate location could pave the way for this site becoming an allocation, and possibly the site adjoining it too (land north of Beeches Avenue) if access could

be via the football club site. Similarly, if it can be shown that a small development is acceptable environmentally on land east of Titnore Lane then this could become an allocation. Do you have any evidence to share with us to support or discount any of these sites?

## Where can I view a copy of the Worthing Draft Local Plan 2016 – 2033?

The Worthing Draft Local Plan 2016-2033 can be viewed using this link:

[www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan](http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan)

Alternatively, hard copies can be viewed at the Council offices (Portland House, Richmond Road, Worthing BN11 1HS and at Worthing Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing, BN11 1HA) or at any of the libraries throughout the borough.

## How long is the consultation period?

The Worthing Draft Local Plan 2016-2033 will be published on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The consultation period will last six weeks and will close at 5pm on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

## 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, drop in sessions, leaflets and posters.

## How do I make 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.

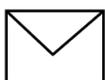


Website: [www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan](http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan)

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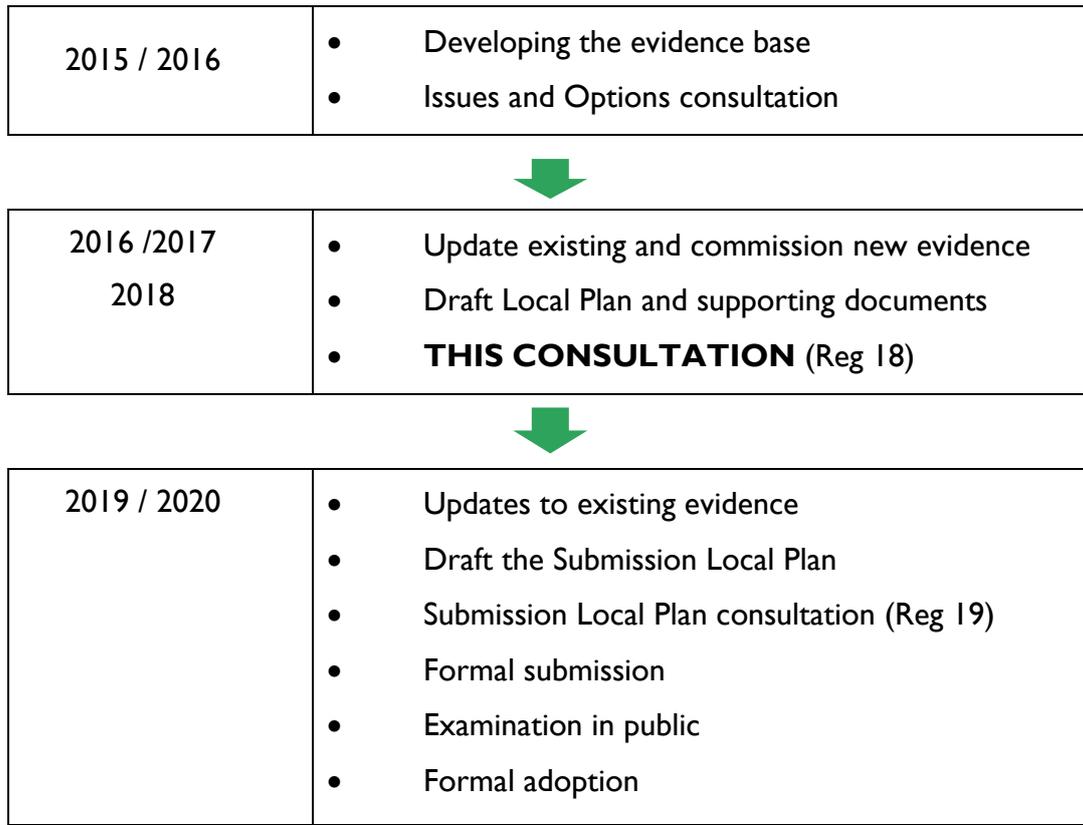


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## What happens after this consultation?

All representations received will be recorded and, where appropriate, the comments will help to inform the preparation of the publication version of the Plan which will be the subject of a further consultation and then submitted for Examination in 2019/20.

## What is the timetable for preparing the new Local Plan?



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