

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding Sites List & Map

Q. How were the sites that have come forward in the 'call for sites' identified?

A. Sites can be put forward by anyone or any organisation and typically have been promoted by land owners, developers, agents, local businesses and individuals in the Borough.

Q. How was the exercise publicised?

A. The exercise was publicised through two calls for sites, January to February 2016 and then again in May to June 2016. Letters/emails of invitation to take part were sent to a wide audience including parish councils, landowners, developers, businesses. A press release was also issued on our website, local papers and via Facebook and Twitter.

Q. Have you analysed whether these sites are suitable?

A. No. At this stage, we have not yet analysed / filtered the sites.

Q. Where can I view more details about the sites?

A. At this stage, prior to the technical assessment, only the outlines of the sites that were received are available to view and some information about where the site is and what uses the sites have been promoted for.

A map is available online via www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate with guidance on how to use it to view the sites.

Q. What will happen to these sites?

A. The sites will be technically assessed in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability (including viability) for different uses. Subject to Councillor approval, this technical assessment of the sites will be made public from June-July 2017 at the Preferred Options consultation stage.

Q. If sites are identified in the 'call for sites' exercise and are being assessed does it mean that they will be allocated for development in the Local Plan?

A. No. The call for sites and the technical assessment of sites will be used to inform the plan, but does not necessarily mean a site will be allocated for development. This is because not all sites considered in the assessment will be suitable or ultimately acceptable for development.

All the sites will be considered holistically across the whole borough to ensure the best strategy for borough-wide development. Allocation of land will depend on different policy constraints (such as designated heritage or environmental sites) and practical constraints (such as rivers and hills).

The decision on allocation of sites will ultimately be made by the Borough Council following public consultation on the options available.

Q. When can I comment on the sites?

A. The list and map are for information purposes only and we will not specifically be inviting comments at this stage of the process. The intention (subject to Executive approval) is to ask people during the Preferred Options Consultation (June to July 2017) for comments on the sites.

Q. How many sites have been promoted so far?

A. Over 200 sites have been promoted through the Call for Sites process.

Q. How many sites will be allocated within the Local Plan Update?

A. At this stage, we do not know how many sites will be allocated. We know our current housing need and this will be worked into the local plan process in order to understand how many sites will need to be allocated in order to help meet our housing need.

Q. Has the Council put forward any of its own sites for development?

A. Yes. They can be reviewed on the Council's website with the other promoted sites.

Q. Will you be assessing every site that has been promoted?

A. Yes. We will assess every site that has been promoted to us. As part of this we will visit each site to form initial observations. We will then undertake an in-depth desk-based study and a sustainability appraisal. The submitted sites will be assessed holistically, that is to say they will be considered in a borough-wide context to ensure the best strategy for Wokingham Borough's future development.

Q. What is a Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A. There is a requirement to produce a Sustainability Appraisal alongside the Local Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal assesses the impact of the issues and options identified against a range of social, environmental and economic objectives. This helps us to ensure that our future policies are sustainable, i.e. they support development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. All the sites will be assessed against the agreed sustainability objectives. A Strategic Environmental Assessment identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects that implementing a Local Plan or programme would have on the environment, as well as reasonable alternatives.

Q. Will you be meeting with site promoters?

A. Given the number of sites to be assessed, we will not be able to hold meetings with promoters of individual sites. However, should we require any further information about a site later on in the assessment process; we will get in touch with the site promoters.

Q. How will existing infrastructure and services cope and what new infrastructure and services will be provided to support the growth?

A. All new development, housing in particular, will contribute to the delivery of appropriate infrastructure either directly or through a financial contribution. The Council is already working closely with the relevant agencies to ensure that the exact infrastructure requirements of specific sites can be understood.

Q. When will the Council allocate the sites?

A. At the Proposed Submission stage, (in 2018) the Council will undertake a consultation on the sites it proposes to allocate as part of the Local Plan Update, subject to future Executive approval. The Local Plan Update timetable (Local Development Scheme) can be found at the following link: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate>

Q. Who will make the final decision as to whether a site is allocated?

A. Ultimately, the independent planning Inspector who examines the Local Plan will decide which sites are to be allocated within the Local Plan Update.