

Local Plan Update

Duty to Co-operate Statement

July 2016

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1. Introduction and Progress so far

Introduction

- 1.1 Wokingham Borough Council has begun to prepare a Local Plan Update for the Borough. The Local Plan Update will refine the current Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, which both cover the period from 2006 to 2026, to provide the strategy for the Borough to 2036. The scope of the plan will be informed by the Issues and Options consultation, which is taking place from 4th August to 4pm on 30th September 2016.

What is your timetable for producing the Local Plan Update?

- 1.2 Wokingham Borough Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out which Local Plan documents the Council will produce and a timetable for each. The LDS is available on the Council website here: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/key-planning-documents/>. The Local Plan Update will be examined publically by an independent Planning Inspector.

What is the Duty to Co-operate?

- 1.3 As a Public body the Council has a statutory Duty to Co-operate with specific bodies in relation to planning for strategic issues in the Local Plan. The legal requirement to undertake a Duty to Co-operate on the production of a Local Plan update is set out in law, within the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 \(section 33 \(a\)\) as amended by the Localism Act 2011 \(Section 110\) and Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) also sets out the purpose of the Duty to Co-operate.

How is the Duty to Co-operate tested?

- 1.4 The Duty to Co-operate is tested at public examination by an independent Planning Inspector. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/duty-to-cooperate/what-is-the-duty-to-cooperate-and-what-does-it-require/> makes it clear that an Authority needs to submit robust evidence of the efforts they have made to co-operate on strategic cross boundary issues.
- 1.5 There are two elements to the test:
- The legal requirement under Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Duty cannot be retrofitted)
 - The NPPF soundness assessment of how effective the co-operation has been
- 1.6 National guidance found in paragraph 182 of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), provides further detail about what is meant by 'sound'

What happens if the Duty has not been complied with?

- 1.7 If the planning authority cannot demonstrate to the Planning Inspector that it has complied with the Duty, then the Plan will be found to be unsound. This would mean that the Council cannot use the Local Plan Update to help inform planning decisions.

How do you demonstrate that the Duty has been complied with?

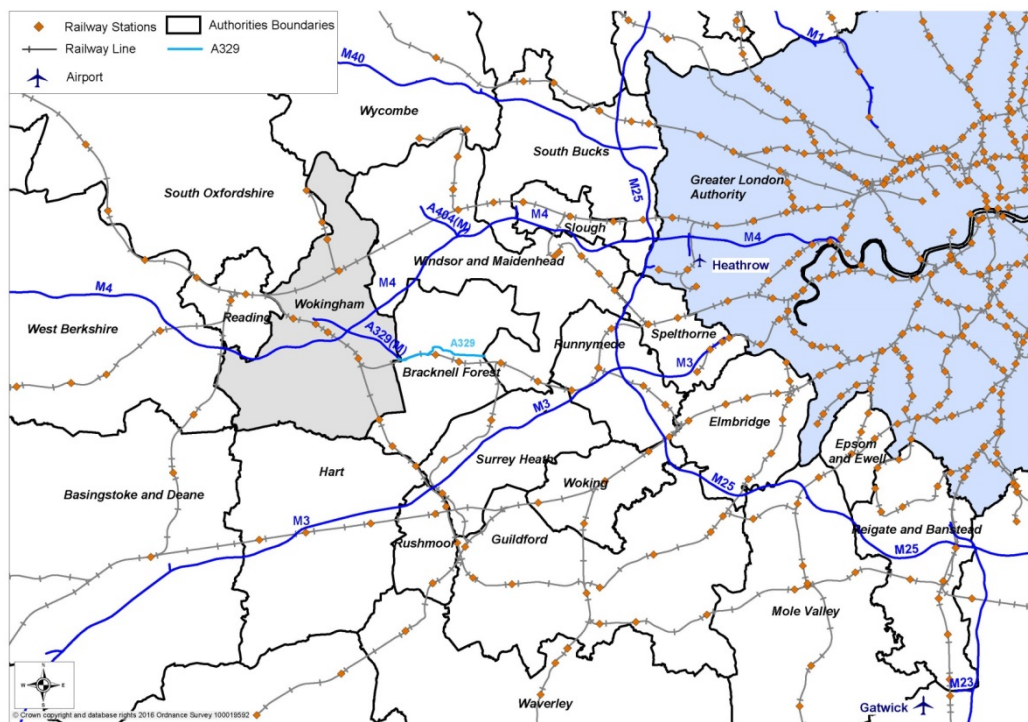
- 1.8 The Duty to Co-operate process is an ongoing process. Co-operation needs to have resulted in a positively prepared plan with an effective outcome.

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2. Where is Wokingham Borough? (The Spatial Portrait)

- 2.1 Wokingham Borough is located within the west of Berkshire, approximately 30 miles west of London, as can be seen in [Figure 1](#). It adjoins the Boroughs of Wycombe to the North; Windsor & Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest to the east; Hart and Basingstoke & Deane to the south and south west respectively; and West Berkshire, Reading and South Oxfordshire to the west.
- 2.2 Wokingham Borough covers an area of some 17,800ha, approximately 16% (2,885ha) of which is designated as Green Belt. The population of the Borough at the time of the 2011 census was recorded as 154,380. The majority of the population live in the larger centres of Wokingham, Earley, and Woodley.

Figure 1 Wokingham Borough in Context



3. What progress on the Duty to Co-operate has been made so far?

- 3.1 We sought views from various bodies (see Table 1) on the Duty to Co-operate scoping statement from 20th April to 18th May 2016 to make sure we had identified the key strategic issues where co-operation might be appropriate.
- 3.2 We have reviewed all of the comments and updated this document based on these. The comments and our responses to them can be seen in Appendix 2 Summary of consultation responses. Any changes that have been made to the document as a direct result of comments we received can be seen by **bold and underline** being used for added text and ~~striketrough~~ for removed text.
- 3.3 This document is the starting point to facilitate meaningful discussions about strategic planning issues to achieve positive outcomes for the Borough. We are now publishing this document alongside the Local Plan Update (LPU) Issues and Options report. The Duty to Co-operate discussions which take place are to be recorded in a future document which will tell our story, which will also bring together engagement with the wider community.
- 3.4 This future document (to be published first at Preferred Options stage in 2017) will demonstrate how we are continuing to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis. It will also set out how we have carried out these engagement activities.

4. Strategic Themes and Existing Arrangements

Strategic Themes

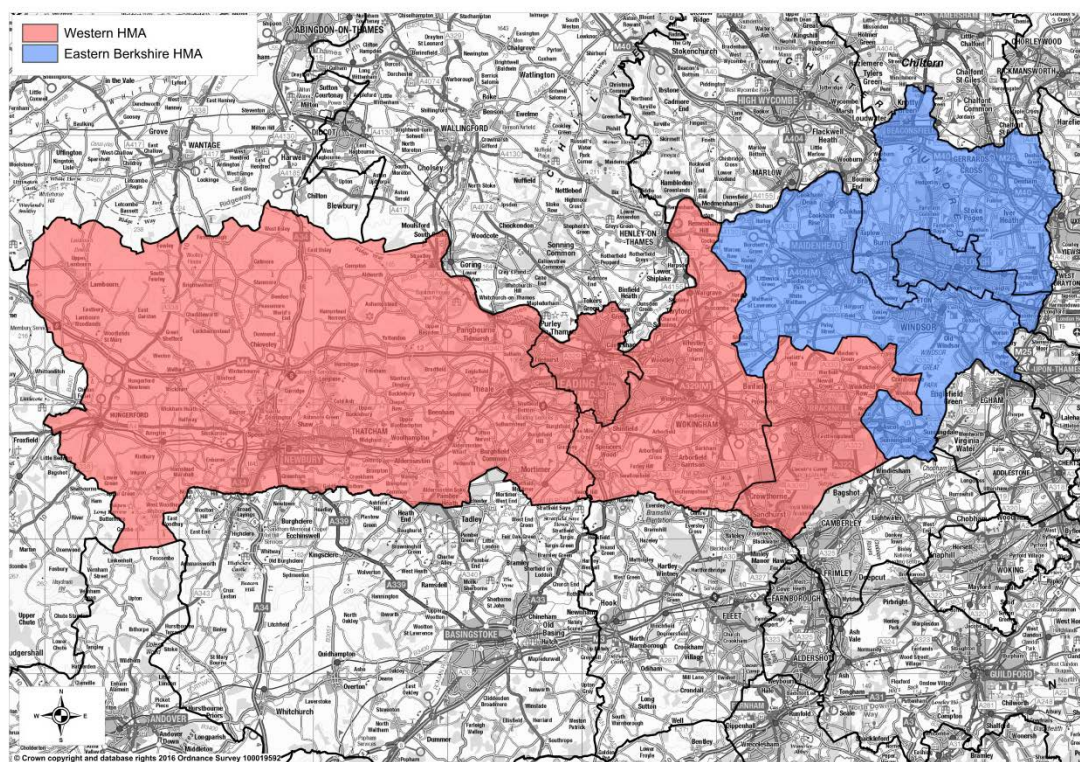
- 4.1 Local authorities have to make sure that their local plan sets out the 'strategic priorities' for the area. There are a number of strategic issues identified in [The National Planning Policy Framework](#) in paragraph 156 which includes topics such as housing, infrastructure, retail etc. The identified issues in this section of the Duty to Co-operate document were originally informed by the NPPF and the existing work with other authorities and organisations. Wokingham Borough Council invited comments from the Duty to Co-operate bodies on the issues that we initially identified. This has led to additional issues being included and [Table 1](#) has been updated accordingly.
- 4.2 You can also see from [Table 2](#) in section 6 of this document that there are a number of existing established working arrangements, where we engage with other authorities and other organisations. Some of the studies and joint work referred to in the Duty to Co-operate document have come about as a result of collaboration through these joint working arrangements. Co-operation on these matters will enable a positively prepared plan to be produced with effective outcomes.

Housing

Housing need and supply for the Borough

- 4.3 Where people live and work is fundamental issue that we are considering in the Local Plan Update. The duty to co-operate is already playing a key role in ensuring that these issues are addressed. With regard to housing needs and supply within the borough, national guidance states that local planning authorities must identify the housing market area which the authority sits within. The housing market area is the starting point for meeting housing need.
- 4.4 A key piece of evidence to underpin how we plan for the current and future needs of the borough is the Berkshire (including South Bucks) [Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\)](#), published in February 2016. The SHMA was commissioned by the six Berkshire authorities as well as the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP).
- 4.5 The SHMA defines Housing Market Areas (HMAs) by analysing where people choose to live and work. The Western HMA comprises West Berkshire, Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell Districts / Boroughs as can be seen in Figure 2. The SHMA also identified an Eastern Berkshire HMA which comprises Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough, and South Bucks districts.
- 4.6 Paragraph 182 of the [NPPF](#) clarifies that "*The plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development*". The four Western HMA authorities are already working together through a joint Berkshire CEX / Leaders group to consider how any housing need can be met in a strategic and planned way.

Figure 2 Housing Market Areas



Gypsy and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople

- 4.7 We have an agreed joint methodology with the other Berkshire authorities for understanding our need for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People provision. This joint methodology was used to inform the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment. We will continue to collaborate across boundaries to ensure that we seek to meet our need up to 2036.

Employment and Retail

Supply of Employment Land

- 4.8 If we are to ensure that Wokingham continues to be ‘a great place to live, an even better place to do business’ (which is the Council’s overarching Vision), we need a balance between housing and jobs. Wokingham sits within the ‘Central Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)’ along with Reading, Bracknell and Windsor & Maidenhead Borough Councils. Co-operation with authorities outside of this area, including both the Western and Eastern Berkshire FEMAs, will be necessary. The SHMA takes into account employment growth as part of understanding our housing need. A separate study called the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) by the six Berkshire authorities, in conjunction with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), has been undertaken to understand what need there is for employment growth in terms of jobs up to 2036 and how much land this might require. The EDNA is based on the Functional Economic Market Area evidence. Please see our economic evidence page on the [Council's website](#) for further information.

*Town centre retail **and leisure***

- 4.9 The majority of people that live in Wokingham Borough shop outside of the Borough, i.e. in Reading.
- 4.10 A retail study – The Western Berkshire Commercial Leisure Assessment 2016 – has been undertaken on behalf of the Western HMA authorities (Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Reading councils). Each of the retail centres in these Boroughs/Districts provides different retail and leisure offerings. People will therefore travel between them and not just shop within their own Borough. The study helps to inform the Local Plan Update in terms of setting out how much additional expenditure will be available up to 2036 to support new retail and commercial leisure development in the Borough.

Infrastructure Provision

Education

- 4.11 Due to the geography of Wokingham Borough, parental preference and school designated areas, some residents will cross local authority boundaries to access education. For example, due to parental preference, there are pupils from Wokingham who opt to attend Yateley School in Hampshire and pupils residing in Bracknell Forest who attend St. Crispins School in Wokingham. Wokingham Borough is currently experiencing a rising demand for primary school places reflecting demographic change driven by housebuilding and high birth rates. It may be necessary to coordinate provision for primary school places with neighbouring authorities in order to meet this demand.
- 4.12 The current rising demand for primary school places will lead in the near future to a rising demand for secondary school places. We will continue to work with neighbouring authorities where necessary to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet the needs of communities. The 'Wokingham Secondary School Provision Strategy 2013-2016' details that 566 pupils residing in Wokingham attend secondary schools in Bracknell, with 334 pupils residing in Bracknell attending Wokingham Borough secondary schools. On the other hand, 517 pupils residing in Wokingham Borough attend schools in Reading Borough with 906 pupils that live in Reading Borough coming to schools in Wokingham Borough. It is therefore necessary to try and engage with surrounding authorities.
- 4.13 The University of Reading's (UoR) main Whiteknights campus is located on the boundary between Wokingham Borough and Reading. Additional UoR facilities are situated in other parts of Wokingham Borough and Reading and therefore collaboration with Reading Borough Council is required.

Health facilities

- 4.14 Healthcare facilities can have cross boundary implications as residents from Wokingham Borough use facilities outside of the Borough such as Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading, the Heatherwood Hospital in Ascot, Frimley Park Hospital in Frimley and Wexham Park Hospital in Slough. As such co-operation with neighbouring authorities and their relevant Clinical Commissioning Groups (including **North Hampshire CCG, North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG**, North and West Reading CCG, South Reading CCG, Surrey

Heath CCG, Slough CCG) is important, as well as co-operation with Wokingham CCG especially regarding the sustainability and transformation plans of the two footprints covering Berkshire's health economies. One of the key areas of concern with future capacity, both nationally and locally, is primary healthcare provision as intended changes to models of care will see primary care work taken from hospitals to local GPs. This may require the delivery of new GP premises. Generally, population growth will lead to increased need for health care provision within Wokingham Borough and beyond. As such close co-operation with the CCG who now have commissioning responsibility for GP services, and NHS England, who oversee the budget, planning, delivery and day to day operation of the CCGs, is required.

Utilities

- 4.15 Utilities infrastructure includes water supply, wastewater treatment, energy supply and telecommunications. These services and their associated infrastructure are provided by the private sector utility companies, which operate within and around the Wokingham Borough area.
- 4.16 The provision of large scale utility infrastructure is an issue that can have cross-boundary consequences. Utility providers are not subject to the duty to co-operate. However, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should also work collaboratively with private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers (paragraph 180). The Council will work with utility providers to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is delivered however they are not identified as duty to co-operate bodies in this Framework.

Flood risk

- 4.17 The Borough is situated within the Thames river basin district and a number of main rivers run through the Borough including the River Thames and its tributary the Foudry Brook, and the River Loddon and its tributaries the Twyford Brook, Emmbrook, Barkham Brook and the River Blackwater. There are also seven major reservoirs ($\geq 25,000\text{m}^3$ of water) located in Wokingham Borough. The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for the flood defences on main rivers and is a key duty to co-operate body. Natural England is also identified as a duty to co-operate body as river corridors are an important wildlife feature. Any new development in Wokingham Borough will have implications not just for us but for neighbouring authorities. For example the Foudry Brook flows through the west of Wokingham Borough before crossing the boundary into Reading Borough and therefore the risks of flooding in Wokingham can have knock on impacts in Reading. Likewise areas identified as being at risk of flooding from the River Blackwater in Bracknell Forest District Council area extend into Wokingham Borough.

Strategic transport links

- 4.18 Transport infrastructure will always require strategic cross boundary co-operation given the way roads, rail etc. extend beyond a single Borough. The delivery of any transport infrastructure capacity and improvements arising from the Local Plan Update may have an impact outside the Borough and likewise Local Plans produced by other local authorities may have an impact on transport infrastructure within Wokingham Borough. Wokingham already works with the Berkshire authorities in relation to cross boundary infrastructure matters, including meetings of Berkshire transport officers (Berkshire

Strategic Transport Forum; Berkshire Heads of Service meetings) which includes representation from all Berkshire authorities. Moving forward, specific issues such as cross-Thames travel will be of particular importance. As potential transport projects emerge through the local plan process, early discussions with neighbouring authorities at the concept stage is vital.

- 4.19 A specific example of where we have already worked with neighbouring authorities is the work undertaken with Bracknell Forest Council to deliver improvements to 'Coppid Beech' roundabout. Additionally data is also being shared with Bracknell Forest Council to facilitate co-ordinated transport planning. Due to the integrated nature of transport infrastructure, there are numerous authorities identified in [Table 1](#) as key co-operation partners which includes all adjoining authorities and additional authorities from further afield where there is specific strategic transport infrastructure (such as Hillingdon Council for Crossrail and Wiltshire Council for the M4). Also, national bodies such as Highways England, who are responsible for the Strategic Road Network, and Network Rail have and will continue to be engaged with. [Table 1](#) also identifies Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and Enterprise M3 LEP as key co-operation bodies for transport issues as they can provide funding towards infrastructure improvements.

Natural and Historic environment, biodiversity and climate change

Biodiversity including Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 4.20 Parts of the Southern section of the Borough are located within the Special Protection area with much of the southern region of the borough located within the 5km and 7km zones from the SPA. The Thames Basin Heath SPA is home to three rare species of ground nesting birds the Dartford Warbler, Skylark, [Nightjar](#) and Woodlark. In order to protect these, the Government has designated the 'Thames Basin Heaths' as a special protection area (SPA) under the European Commission Birds Directive and placed mitigation zones around the heaths to lessen the impact of human activity on them. Co-operation with the other authorities presently takes place through officer and member forums (e.g. Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board; Blackwater Valley Network / Countryside Partnership; Loddon Catchment Steering Group) and such discussions will be ongoing. **The Local Plan Update will also consider species protected under the range of national and international legislation, Local Wildlife Sites and Wildlife Trust protected reserves as well as consider issues of water quality amongst other relevant issues for biodiversity. We will engage with Natural England and other bodies as appropriate.**

Landscape including Green Belt

- 4.21 Approximately 16% of Wokingham Borough's area comprises Green Belt and significant landscapes within the borough cross over into neighbouring authorities.
- 4.22 Wokingham and Bracknell Forest Councils have jointly commissioned a review of the Green Belt. The review seeks to assess how green belt land within the Boroughs of

Wokingham and Bracknell Forest functioned against the five purposes of the green belt, as defined in paragraph 80 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF).

- 4.23 **Additional discussions would likely be needed with adjoining authorities in order to ensure that important landscapes, which may prevent the merging of towns and villages, are appropriately considered.**

Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Consultation Zones

- 4.24 The consultation zones of extendibility of the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield cover parts of the south western area of Wokingham. Though the facility itself, as well as AWE Aldermaston, is located within West Berkshire the zones also cover parts of Reading and Basingstoke and Deane Council areas. We need to consider the implications of these zones when looking at where development should go. This requires engagement with the authorities and the Office of Nuclear Regulation.

Historic Environment

- 4.25 It is essential that co-operation with Historic England on matters concerning the historic environment is undertaken throughout the local plan process. **The NPPF defines the historic environment as “all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora”.** Statutory consultation with Historic England already takes place as part of the development management process and through other consultations. It may also be necessary to engage with adjoining authorities where heritage assets may be located along **or close to** Borough boundaries for example Reading where Whiteknights Campus (previously mentioned) contains a number of designated heritage assets.

Open Space

- 4.26 Planning for open space needs associated with development for the existing and future population may require cross-boundary co-operation. This may be the case, for example, if the provision of open space is required to serve new development on the other side of an authority boundary.

Climate change

- 4.27 Climate change is a matter that is specified as a required duty to co-operate topic. However, by its very nature, climate change is a global issue and therefore a number of bodies (see [Table 1](#)) have been identified against this topic in order to cover any eventualities. **We will seek to minimise impacts on air quality as well as contribute to the reduction of air pollution which is set out, among many other issues, in the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment**

5. Issues and Bodies

- 5.1 Table 1 sets out the strategic issues and the organisations and bodies that the Council considers it will need to engage with during the Local Plan Update process and thereafter in order to satisfy the Duty to Co-operate.

Table 1 Issues and Bodies															
Organisation	Strategic Theme														
	Housing, employment and economic development				Infrastructure provision					Natural and historic environment, biodiversity and climate change					
	Housing need and supply for the Borough	Gypsy and Travellers, travelling show people	Supply of employment land	Town centre and retail	Education and health facilities	Health facilities	Utilities	Flood risk	Strategic transport links	Biodiversity including Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area & Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Landscape including Greenbelt	Atomic Weapons Establishment Consultation zones	Historic environment	Open Space	Climate change
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust										✓					
Berkshire Local Nature Partnership								✓		✓	✓				✓
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Buckinghamshire County Council	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Centrica/British Gas							✓								
Chiltern	✓		✓												✓
Civil Aviation Authority									✓						
Ealing Council									✓						✓

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East Hampshire District Council	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>		<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>		<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>
Elmbridge Borough Council										✓					✓
Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	✓		✓						✓						✓
Environment Agency							✓	✓		✓					✓
Guildford Borough Council										✓					✓
Hampshire County Council					✓	✓			✓	✓					✓
Hart District Council	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Highways England									✓						✓
Hillingdon Council									✓						✓
Historic England													✓		
Homes and Communities Agency	✓	✓													
London Enterprise Panel (LEP)	✓		✓						✓						✓
Marine Management Organisation															

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Mayor of London	✓						✓		✓						
Mole Valley District Council										✓					
National Grid							✓								
National Rail									✓						
Natural England								✓		✓				✓	✓
NHS England	✓				✓	✓									
NHS Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group	✓				✓	✓			✓						
Office of Rail and Road									✓						
Oxford City Council									✓						✓
Oxfordshire County Council									✓						✓
Oxfordshire LEP	✓		✓						✓						✓
Reading Borough Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓

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Royal Society for the Protection of Birds										✓					
Runnymede Borough Council	✓									✓					✓
Rushmoor Borough Council	✓		✓				✓			✓					✓
Scottish & Southern Energy							✓								
Slough Borough Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓
South Bucks District Council	✓		✓								✓				✓
South East Water							✓								
South Oxfordshire District Council	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓
Spelthorne Borough Council										✓					
Surrey Heath Borough Council	✓		✓							✓					✓
Surrey County Council									✓	✓					✓
Thames Valley Berkshire LEP	✓		✓	✓					✓						✓
Thames Water							✓								
Transport for London									✓						

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Vale of White Horse District Council			✓												✓
Waverley Borough Council										✓					
West Berkshire District Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wiltshire Borough Council									✓						✓
Woking Borough Council	✓									✓	✓				✓
Wycombe District Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Notes:

1. The above listed bodies are those with whom the Council considers it has a duty to co-operate with under the Localism Act 2011. There will be many other groups and organisations which the Council will need to consult and liaise with in drawing up its local policies and the absence of an organisation from the above list does not mean that the Council will not involve that organisation.
2. The Council will need to look in more detail at minerals and waste planning matters at a later stage. The production of this plan will be supported by Duty to Co-operate discussions which are intended to be evidenced through the Minerals and Waste Local Plan process.
3. There may be other local authorities and organisations to whom the duty to co-operate will also apply that will be added at a later date.

6. Mechanisms for Co-operation

- 6.1 Table 2 shows some of the ways we already engage with neighbouring authorities and organisations:
- 6.2 The mechanisms for co-operation will vary according to the matter and the organisation/s involved. The mechanisms will also evolve as the Local Plan Update and supporting evidence base progresses. The following mechanisms could be involved in the duty to co-operate, some of which are already in place:
- Officer and/or councillor meetings
 - Correspondence
 - Memoranda of understanding
 - Joint evidence studies
 - Joint methodologies for evidence studies
 - Joint consultations on evidence studies or plans
 - Partnership boards
 - Joint Local Plans
 - Joint committees
- 6.3 The structures for co-operation for the 6 local authorities within Berkshire (Wokingham Borough, Bracknell Forest, Reading Borough, West Berkshire District, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Slough Borough) are well established. There are groupings at different levels that meet on a regular basis which include the following:
- Berkshire Leaders
 - Berkshire Chief Executives
 - Berkshire Heads of Planning
 - SHMA Reference Group
 - Development Plans Group (planning policy lead officers from each of the six authorities)
- 6.4 The Development Plans Group (DPG) is key to joint working to meet the requirements of the duty to co-operate. For example, the DPG together with the Local Enterprise Partnership, form the steering group for the production of the SHMA. In addition, there are also officer level groupings dealing with matters such as minerals and waste and transport.
- 6.5 The lead planning members from all of the Berkshire local authorities have formed a SHMA Reference Group which held its first meeting on 15 September 2015. This will be a key mechanism for co-operation on housing needs.
- 6.6 There are also well established structures for co-operating on matters outside Berkshire with regards to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) which covers 11 local authority areas including Wokingham Borough. There is an officer working group and a Joint Strategic Members Board which includes Natural England. Agreed avoidance and mitigation measures are implemented through the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework 2009.
- 6.7 Much of the work that is already underway deals with joint evidence production or joint methodologies. For instance, all six Berkshire unitary authorities as well as the Thames

Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) co-operated on the SHMA, FEMA and the EDNAs.

- 6.8 The Council has been involved in dialogue/engagement with neighbouring authorities on cross boundary transport issues such as working with Bracknell Forest District Council, on various schemes including their strategic development locations. The Council has also been involved in dialogue with other Berkshire Unitary Authorities via DPG, the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum and the Berkshire Thames Valley Local Economic Partnership.
- 6.9 Regarding the production of joint plans, there are not currently any formal proposals for joint plan making other than for minerals and waste. However, joint working within and outside Berkshire will continue to develop, and may involve different types of co-operation or different groupings of authorities.
- 6.10 There are existing arrangements in place for co-operation between the London authorities and authorities in the South East at both officer and member level. These discussions are largely concerned with the wider influence London has on the South East. **The Council will continue to be involved where relevant given Wokingham sits within the 'Western Wedge' Coordination Corridor extending from west London into the Thames Valley.**
- 6.11 Table 2 sets out some of the mechanisms for co-operation and what the aims / outcomes are.

Table 2 Existing co-operative groups

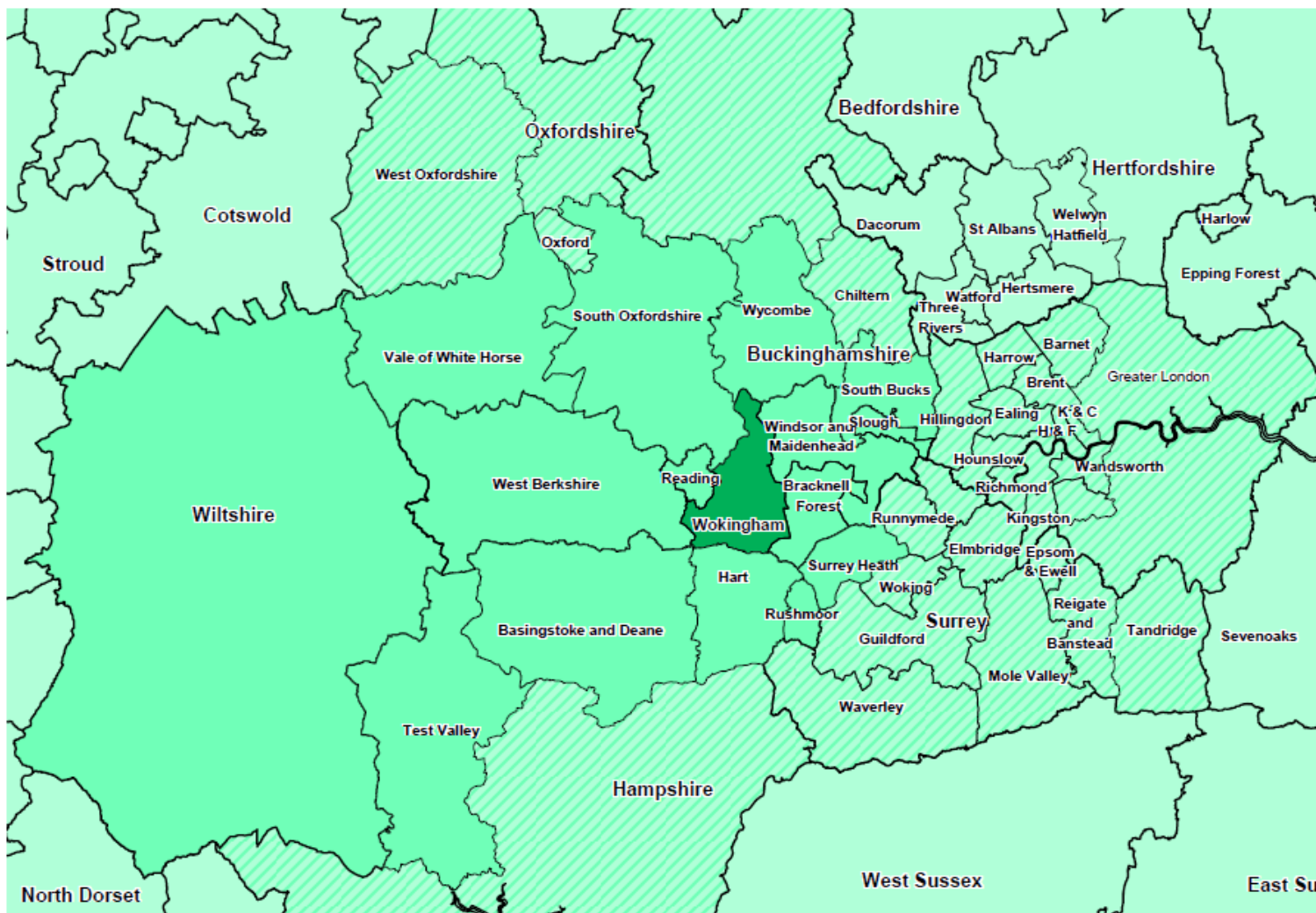
Existing co-operative groups	Group organisation/information	Aims/outcomes
<i>Berkshire Economic Development Officers Group</i>	This group meets every two months and comprises representatives of each of the 6 Berkshire authorities and also the Local Enterprise Partnership.	The group reviews economic development in the Thames Valley Berkshire area, including supporting development of the Strategic Economic Plan, in order to support the economy of the geographic area.
<i>Berkshire Heads of Planning</i>	The Development Plans group referenced below feeds into the Berkshire Heads of Planning Group, on which sit senior planning officers from each of the six Berkshire authorities who meet bi-monthly.	The group provides a high level, strategic planning policy overview for the Berkshire unitary authorities, and a forum for discussion on matters of mutual interest/concern.
<i>Berkshire Housing Enablers Group</i>	This group is a long-standing group of officers from the 6 Berkshire local authorities and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) that currently meet on an ad hoc basis.	The group calls meetings as and when there are issues that warrant sharing of best practice and approaches. For example, the Group last met in February 2016 to discuss the Housing and Planning Bill, NPPF consultation and Custom and

Existing co-operative groups	Group organisation/information	Aims/outcomes
		Self-Build Act.
<i>Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum</i>	Wokingham Borough Council is a fully engaged member of the Forum and is represented at both member and officer level.	The Forum brings together the Local Enterprise Partnership, the six local transport authorities, the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Highways England, Heathrow Airport Limited, and some train and bus operating companies to discuss and consult on matters of mutual interest relating to strategic transport issues in Thames Valley Berkshire. The Forum aims to agree schemes and work which may be taken forward jointly for bidding and implementation.
<i>Blackwater Valley Network / Countryside Partnership</i>	The Council has been part of this partnership since 1971, with local authorities from Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey, which coordinates works in the Valley.	The role of the BVCP is to deliver an expert, experienced and centralised resource to coordinate projects and actions of all involved parties and stakeholders in the Blackwater Valley for mutual benefit. It also increases sustainable usage of the Blackwater Valley especially for informal outdoor recreation and ensures wildlife and landscape protection.
<i>Development Plans Group (DPG)</i>	This group involves planning policy managers of the 6 Berkshire authorities and meets bi-monthly.	DPG provides a coordinating role for planning policy officers across Berkshire to share information and discuss matters of mutual planning interest on a bi-monthly basis. DPG along with Berkshire Heads of Planning and the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP coordinate evidence base work to inform Local Plans which has recently included the now published Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA); the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) and are also overseeing other joint studies to ensure that we work collaboratively on cross boundary issues. These studies are explained in more detail in section 5.

Existing co-operative groups	Group organisation/information	Aims/outcomes
<i>Elevate Berkshire</i>	Elevate Berkshire, formerly the Reading and Central Berkshire City Deal, centres around giving young people who grew up and live in the area the skills they need to access local job opportunities.	The work of this organisation includes driving down the skills gap that exists, which in some cases can mean young people are not accessing any employment opportunities that may be available, and investing in the necessary infrastructure, including homes and transport, necessary to support young people.
<i>South East Waste Planning Advisory Group</i>	The Council is a member of this regional group which coordinates work in relation to waste issues.	The aim of the group is to work towards a joint plan produced by central and east Berkshire authorities which will provide policies against which development proposals will be assessed.
<i>Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board</i>	The Council is a full member of this group. Officers and members of the authority contribute to the work of the Board which meets at least twice yearly since October 2007	To provide a forum for joint working and liaison between the local authorities and other organisations affected by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, to address matters relating to the management and protection of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and associated land management and planning issues that are of interest to the member organisations.
<i>Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership</i>	Wokingham Borough Council is actively engaged in the work of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership at the highest level. Wokingham Borough Councillor Keith Baker sits on the LEP Executive (which meets monthly) representing the 6 Unitary Council Leaders, and Councillor Stuart Munro sits on the LEP's decision making Forum (which meets bi-monthly).	The local authority members of the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership work together to prioritise economic development and work collaboratively across the geographic area.

Appendix 1 Map of Strategic Planning Area

Shaded authorities represent identified duty to co-operate partners; those hatched represent authorities not specifically identified but which are within an area covered by a strategic planning body that is identified.



Appendix 2 Summary of consultation responses

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Relevant section</u>	<u>Response summary</u>	<u>WBC response</u>
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Although the borough council's own duty to co-operate statement concludes that no significant cross boundary transport issues currently exist, given the longer timescales being considered and potential growth in population and travel movements it is suggested that strategic transport is highlighted as a strategic issue at this stage.	Noted. Change made Basingstoke and Deane BC have been added to <u>Table 1</u> as a key co-operation body for strategic transport.
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Water quality and the River Loddon is not reflected in Table 2 as a strategic issue. It is suggested that this be included, in line with the borough council's duty to co-operate statement	Noted. Change made Water Quality has not been included as a discreet topic on its own, but reference has now been made to it in the biodiversity section. It is noted that WBC's Sustainability Objective 16 (see SA/SEA report here) states that the council will seek: <i>'To maintain, and, where appropriate improve water quality (including groundwater and surface water) and to achieve sustainable water resource management of both surface and groundwater flows'</i> . Therefore this issue will be considered as part of the Local Plan Update and co-operation with Basingstoke and Deane will occur as appropriate.
Basingstoke and	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	The town centre and retail strategic issue could be	Noted. Change made

Deane Borough Council	and 5.1.8 – 5.1.9	widened to also pick up leisure uses particularly commercial leisure which has potential cross boundary implications. Given the timescales involved and the potential growth of leisure and retail in the borough, at this stage it is suggested that this is highlighted as a strategic issue.	The heading Town Centre and Retail has been altered to include leisure and it is noted that paragraph 4.10 (formerly 5.1.9) now mentions commercial leisure already
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	The Borough Council council is unclear why historic environment is a strategic issue for duty to co-operate between the 2 areas and it is suggested that this is removed	Noted. Change made. We agree that there may not be any immediately obvious matters to discuss re the historic environment, but, as set out in paragraph 4.25 (formerly 5.3.4) “heritage assets may be located along [or close to] Borough boundaries” and as per the NPPF definition (which has been added to paragraph 4.25 also), co-operation regarding the historic environment may become apparent through the local plan process. Therefore this topic has been highlighted as a key strategic issue for all those authorities that adjoin WBC and Basingstoke and Deane will continue to be so included. The wording ‘or close to’ has been added to 4.25 for additional clarity.
Bracknell Forest Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Bracknell Forest Council supports co-operation on all of the identified strategic themes. We welcome the opportunity for on-going discussion relating to the preparation of your Local Plan, and	Noted. No change required.

		ask to be kept informed of any future consultations on the Plan and evidence base as highlighted above	
Buckinghamshire County Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	BCC welcomes co-operation with Wokingham Borough Council on the strategic themes of housing, employment and economic development; infrastructure provision, the natural and historic environment, biodiversity and climate change.	Noted. No change required
Buckinghamshire County Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	As the Education Authority, Flood Authority and Highways Authority for Buckinghamshire, BCC would welcome co-operation with Wokingham Borough Council on these issues and for these to be represented within the scope of the Duty to Co-operate Statement	Noted. Change made. BCC have been added to Table 1 as a key co-operation body for education and flooding. Bucks CC had already been identified as a key body for strategic transport
Buckinghamshire County Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	BCC also welcomes co-operation on strategic transport provision, on road and rail strategic infrastructure and invites co-operation on issues of biodiversity, landscape including Green Belt and the historic environment	Noted. Change made. BCC have been added to <u>Table 1</u> as a key co-operation body for biodiversity and historic environment. Bucks CC had already been identified as a key co-operation body for landscape including green belt.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	East Hampshire have taken over the planning policy responsibilities of Hart District Council.	Noted. Change made. East Hampshire have been added to <u>Table 1</u> as a key body.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	There are no strategic issues that are absent from Table 2.	Noted. No change required.

East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Regarding housing need and supply, and the supply of employment land, it is understood why Hart is listed as potentially having to co-operate. However Hart's position is that Wokingham must first seek to meet its own needs under these topics, or find other authorities in its housing market area/functional economic area to meet any unmet needs, before approaching authorities outside those areas.	Noted. No change required. It is WBC's intention to first seek to address housing need with the Western Berkshire HMA authorities, though discussions with Hart (East Hampshire DC), as an adjoining authority will be important.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	With regards to gypsy and travellers and travelling showpeople, again, we would expect Wokingham to meet its own needs, and therefore think the need to co-operate on addressing needs is unlikely	Noted. No change made. It is confirmed that WBC will seek to meet its own needs within the borough but it is considered that WBC may wish to engage in DtC discussions with neighbouring authorities should sites be considered adjacent to their boundary.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	If Hart is listed as a DtC body for education and health, then so should Hampshire County Council as the Education Authority covering Hart	Noted. Change made. EHDC have been added to <u>Table 1</u> as a key co-operation body for education.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	If Hart is listed under education health, then so should the relevant CCG (either North Hampshire CCG or North East Hampshire & Farnham CCG). It is suggested that education and health be split into separate topics in order to better identify the issues and bodies involved.	Noted. Additional wording added to paragraph 4.14 (formerly 5.2.4) and separate headings made in <u>Table 1</u> .
East Hampshire	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	With regards landscape, greater clarity would be	Noted. Change made.

District Council		welcomed as to what outcomes would be sought through co-operation. The document refers mainly to Green Belt issues which don't affect Hart. However, protecting gaps between settlements could fall under this category	Additional wording has been added to 4.23 (formerly 5.3.2) to reflect these comments.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	It is not clear to me that Hart needs to work with Wokingham on the historic environment or open space issues, unless there is a cross boundary issue that I am not aware of? If so, please provide greater clarity	Noted. No change made. We agree that there may not be any immediately obvious matters to discuss re the historic environment, but, as set out in paragraph 4.25 (formerly 5.3.4) "heritage assets may be located along [or close to] Borough boundaries" and as per the NPPF definition (which has been added to paragraph 4.25 also), co-operation regarding the historic environment may become apparent through the local plan process. Therefore this topic has been highlighted as a key strategic issue for all those authorities that adjoin WBC and Basingstoke and Deane will continue to be so included. The wording 'or close to' has been added to 4.25 for additional clarity.
East Hampshire District Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	With regards to climate change, I agree that as a global issue, it is simplest to include lots of bodies under this topic. However in practice I am not sure what it is that Wokingham and Hart would work together on to deliver under the duty.	Noted. No change made. WBC agrees that in practice there may not be any matters to discuss, but, as set out in paragraph 4.27 (formerly 5.3.6), it is difficult to define the limits of who should be involved in this matter. We therefore

			intend to keep the list as it is for the time being.
Environment Agency	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	We have no detailed comments to make on the duty to co-operate statement. However, we are pleased to note that we have been included in 4 strategic themes. In preparing for updating your Local Plan, we advise you to update all relevant evidence documents for the 4 themes identified. In addition to this, if there are allocations proposed within the update then Wokingham Borough Council must consider whether a Water Cycle Study might be needed as supporting evidence.	Noted. No change required These issues will need to be considered in more depth through the Local Plan Update.
Historic England	General	Agree that it would be appropriate for Historic England to be identified as a partner organisation for the “historic environment”, such as where this is a strategic matter, but would emphasise that co-operation need not be constrained to only as regards designated heritage assets - for local plan purposes we take a broad view of the historic environment in line with the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework.	Noted. Change made. Reference to the NPPF definition has been included in paragraph 4.25 (formerly 5.3.4).
Historic England	General	Highlight that the other issues may also have implications for the historic environment. We will, of course, be able to express any views we may have on such implications during the consultation periods on the Local Plan, but we would ask that if discussions are to be held about other issues that have a specific implication for the historic	Noted. No change made. No additional issues will highlighted concerning Historic England for now, but this does not preclude co-operation on such other matters in the future.

		environment, we be invited to participate.	
Historic England	General	We would also emphasise our willingness to work with the Council on matters affecting the historic environment that do not fall within the definition of “strategic matter” and therefore are not covered by the duty to co-operate. We would be particularly pleased to liaise with the Council outside the formal consultation periods on the Plan.	Noted. No change required.
Mayor of London	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Welcome the inclusion of the Mayor and Transport for London amongst the bodies identified for strategic co-operation on housing, utilities and strategic transport links.	Noted. No change required
Mayor of London	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	The wider economic links with London should also be recognised, as Wokingham sits within the ‘Western Wedge’ Coordination Corridor extending from west London into the Thames Valley. These corridors are set out in Policy 2.3 of the London Plan for the coordination of planning and investment.	Noted. Change made. Additional wording added to new paragraph 6.10.
Mayor of London	<i>Housing need and supply for the Borough</i>	In terms of identifying its housing need, the Council may wish to take account of the long term migration patterns set out in the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment as well as the shorter term 2012-based Subnational Population Projections (SNPP), which underpin the standard CLG household projections. The NPPF reference to meeting the objectively assessed housing requirements is	Noted. No change made. This issue will need to be considered in more depth through the Local Plan Update

		welcome.	
Mayor of London	<i>Strategic transport links</i>	From a transport perspective connectivity and capacity of the strategic transport links on the London to Reading rail route will improve considerably, both on the Great Western Mainline and into London Waterloo. The arrival of the Elizabeth Line will also contribute to a significant increase in peak capacity into London. There will also be an interchange with HS2 at Old Oak Common. The Council may wish to look closely at development opportunities related to these transport improvements during the further preparation of the Local Plan Update.	Noted. No change made. This issue will need to be considered in more depth through the Local Plan Update
Natural England	Paragraph 4.21 (formerly 5.3.1)	Paragraph 5.3.1 has an error in it. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, is not designated to protect the Skylark. Please replace Skylark with Nightjar as this is a species the SPA is designated to protect	Noted. Change made. Correction has made to this paragraph
Natural England	Section 4.21 (formerly 5.3)	In terms of Biodiversity included within Section 5.3 “Natural and Historic Environment” there is more to this than just protecting Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These include Species protected under the range of national and international legislation, Local Wildlife Sites and Wildlife Trust protected reserves.	Noted. Change proposed. Additional wording has been added to paragraph 4.20 (formerly 5.3.1.)
Natural England	General	We would like to see reference in this document to the issue of Air Pollution, which is also a Strategic	Noted. Minor change proposed.

		Issue which needs addressing across the South East. Not only does it affect Human Health, but also likely to affect the various designated sites mentioned above. It doesn't necessarily need its own category, but reference to it within Biodiversity or Climate Change would be worthwhile	This issue will need to be considered in more depth through the Local Plan Update. Reference to air pollution is now made in paragraph 4.27. It is noted that the importance of minimising air pollution is reflected in objectives 9 and 11 of the SA/SEA and this will inform the approach taken with the LPU. We will also liaise with other bodies such as Highways England on this point.
Runnymede Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Table 2 at pages 10 to 13 of the document sets out the strategic issues and the organisations and bodies that your Council considers it will need to engage with during the Local Plan Update process and thereafter in order to satisfy the Duty to Co-operate. Runnymede Borough Council agrees with the list of issues considered as being relevant between our two authorities, i.e. Housing need and supply for Wokingham Borough, Biodiversity (including the TBH SPA), and Climate Change.	Noted. No change required.
Rushmoor Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	Rushmoor BC is keen to ensure that both authorities take a consistent approach and reach an agreement on the cross boundary strategic issues, which require engagement, in order to satisfy the duty to co-operate. It is noted that the Rushmoor Duty to Co-operate Framework document (2015) identified the following strategic issues considered relevant between the two authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Housing - housing need/SHMA/OAN 	Noted. No change required.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Thames Basin Heaths SPA – SANG . Natural Environment <p>We note that the Wokingham Duty to Co-operate statement identifies the following strategic issues considered relevant between the two authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Housing need and supply for the Borough . Supply of Employment Land . Utilities . Biodiversity, including TBHSPA and SSSI . Climate Change <p>The Council is keen to ensure that both authorities take a consistent approach and reach an agreement on the cross boundary strategic issues, which require engagement, in order to satisfy the duty to co-operate. Rushmoor BC agrees with the identification of housing need and supply, and Biodiversity as issues.</p>	
		<p>The Rushmoor Duty to Co-operate document (2015) did not identify economic development as a strategic issue relevant between the two authorities. Rushmoor BC recognise that the 2011 census travel to work areas and Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) Study identifies a relationship between the Berkshire FEMA and the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath FEMA and therefore we agree that there is merit in identifying this as a strategic cross boundary issue. However, it is noted in the Berkshire FEMA that Wokingham Borough has</p>	Noted. No change made.

		a relatively self-contained local travel to work area with particularly strong links to other parts of Berkshire and that commuting flows between Wokingham Borough and Rushmoor Borough are relatively low. Therefore, in the first instance, we will be working with our FEA partners to ensure the protection of adequate employment land to meet future economic growth needs.	
Rushmoor Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	We do not consider that there are any strategic issues, relevant to Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) and Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), absent from Table 2.	Noted. No change required.
Rushmoor Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2) and paragraph 3.1	We recognise the potential need to identify additional strategic cross boundary issues requiring engagement. However, given the need to demonstrate sustained and active engagement on a number of cross boundary strategic issues with a number of duty to co-operate bodies, we are cautious about introducing additional strategic issues as part of the framework. Therefore, we would want to be confident that any additional issues represent strategic cross boundary matters, which require specific engagement or require specific outputs in order produce effective and deliverable policies and address strategic cross boundary matters.	Noted. No change required.
Rushmoor Borough Council	Table 1 (formerly table 2)	The RBC Duty to Co-operate framework document (2015) did not identify climate change or utilities as	Noted. Partial change made. WBC agrees that in practice there may not

		<p>relevant cross boundary issues between the two authorities. We are mindful of the wider influences on these issues and their strategic nature. However, we do not consider that active and sustained engagement on these issues is currently required or that this engagement would result in outputs that would not already be achieved in the absence of specific engagement on these issues (i.e. through the preparation of effective and deliverable Local Plan policies and preparation of evidence on infrastructure delivery to support local plan delivery).</p>	<p>be any matters to discuss relating to climate change and it is also noted that this is picked up in other documents such as the SA/SEA document. However, as set out in paragraph 4.27 (formerly 5.3.6), it is difficult to define the limits of who should be involved in this matter. We therefore intend to keep the list as it is for the time being.</p> <p>It is agreed that it is not necessary to identify Rushmoor Borough Council as a specific co-operation body for Utilities and <u>Table 1</u> has been updated accordingly.</p>
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