



Planning Policy,
Development & Regulation,
West Berkshire Council,
Market Street,
Newbury.
RG14 5LD

By email to: planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk

7 November 2023

Dear Planning Policy Team,

**Examination of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039
Outstanding strategic housing issues**

The purpose of this letter is to update Bracknell Forest Council's Regulation 19 response (dated 22nd February 2023) in respect of the above.

As you are aware, our Regulation 19 response raised concerns about the soundness of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (WBLPR). This was due to the lack of consideration given to how the outstanding unmet need of 230 dwellings within Reading Borough's adopted local plan (covering the period 2021 to 2036) was to be addressed in view of the content of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the authorities in the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area that was completed in August 2021.

Furthermore, the content of the MoU was reflected in a SoCG that was signed by Reading Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Council, in December 2021 ([Core submitted documents | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#) LP/CG/011). This was shortly before the Pre-Submission version of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP) was submitted to Government for Examination. Proposed Main Modifications have now been published for consultation until 12th December 2023.

Main Modification MM7 – Section 7.1/Policy LP3 (which forms part of the current consultation), suggests that para 7.7 (last sentence) of the Pre Submission version of the BFLP is modified to read:

~~'Under the standard method for calculating local housing need, there is currently no unmet need that needs addressing.~~ There is an unmet need within Reading Borough's adopted local plan (covering the period 2021 to 2036) of 230 dwellings, which is projected to arise in the second half of the plan period. As agreed by Western Berkshire HMA authorities, this unmet need will be accommodated in the HMA area. Whilst Reading Borough Council's preference is that this

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need should be met as closely as possible to where needs arise, this Plan incorporates sufficient flexibility to accommodate some of the need, should it not be possible to identify suitable sites closer to Reading.'

It is now understood that Reading Borough Council intends to revisit the unmet need as part of its Local Plan Review, with a Regulation 18 consultation planned for the end of this year. It is believed that the position in Reading Borough has evolved due to a number of factors including higher densities being achieved than expected, the development of a new evidence base and a focus on redeveloping central sites.

In view of the above developments, Bracknell Forest Council does not now wish to raise an objection on grounds of soundness, as previously expressed in its Regulation 19 letter to West Berkshire Council.

Yours sincerely,

Max Baker
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Place, Planning & Regeneration
Bracknell Forest Council

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