

## Examination of West Berkshire Local Plan 2022-2039

**Inspector:** William Fieldhouse BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

**Programme Officer:** Ian Kemp

**Tel:** 07723009166

**Email:** [ian@localplanservices.co.uk](mailto:ian@localplanservices.co.uk)

**Examination webpage:** <https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/westberkshirelpr>

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### IN7: Examination Hearing Sessions

#### Introduction

I advised in October 2023 that I would set out subsequent steps in the examination when I had considered written statements in response to my matters, issues and questions and the outcome of the ongoing work being carried out by the Council in liaison with some representors<sup>1</sup>.

Written statements in response to my issues and questions relating to examination matters 1 to 3 received by the deadline of Friday 16 February 2024 have now been published on the examination website. The deadline for statements relating to matters 4 to 13 remains midday on Friday 22 March 2024 as previously advised<sup>2</sup>.

The Council's written response to issue 1.13 provides an update on further work relating to the strategic and local road network. Statements of common ground between the Council and Historic England, and Thames Water, are expected to be published shortly. The Council expects discussions with the Integrated Care Board about primary health care provision on the North East Thatcham site to continue but that final requirements would only be established as part of the examination process<sup>3</sup>. Finally, the Council expects to reach agreement with the Environment Agency in March 2024<sup>4</sup>.

#### Dates of Hearing Sessions

Having regard to the above, and the need to progress this examination, I am now in a position to confirm that the hearing sessions will commence at **9.30 on Wednesday 8 May 2024**.

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<sup>1</sup> IN5, published 25 October 2023.

<sup>2</sup> IN6, published 21 November 2023.

<sup>3</sup> EXAM3 SPQ4, published 20 October 2023.

<sup>4</sup> EXAM3 SPQ48, published 20 October 2023.

The hearing sessions will be held at **Shaw House, Church Road, Newbury RG14 2DR** and the **Council Chamber, West Berkshire Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD**.

The hearing sessions are currently expected to be held over 11 days in May and June 2024:

- Days 1 and 2: Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 May 2024 (Shaw House)
- Days 3 to 5: Tuesday 21 to Thursday 23 May 2024 (Council Chamber)
- Days 6 to 8: Tuesday 4 to Thursday 6 June 2024 (Shaw House)
- Days 9 to 11: Tuesday 11 to Thursday 13 June 2024 (Shaw House)

Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 June and Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 July are booked as reserve days.

The Council must give formal notice under regulation 24 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 at least six weeks before the first hearing session opens on Wednesday 8 May 2024.

### **Provisional Hearings Programme**

A provisional programme setting out the matters and issues to be considered at each of the hearing sessions is attached as **Annex A** to this note.

### **Participating in Hearing Sessions**

Only those who have made valid representations under regulation 20 (ie in response to the Plan published for consultation in January 2022) seeking to change the Plan have a right to be heard (ie participate at a hearing session). Written representations carry the same weight as those made orally at a hearing session. Participation at the hearings is therefore only likely to be beneficial if you have particular points that you wish to discuss arising from my questions relating to the matters and issues published on 21 November 2023 (IN6).

Any representor that wishes to exercise their right to be heard must inform the Programme Officer by **midday on Friday 8 March 2024**. You must do this regardless of what you may have indicated in your representations to the Council. If you do not contact the Programme Officer by that date, it will be assumed that you do not wish to be heard and you will not be listed as a participant.

Representors who do wish to participate should indicate in their response to the Programme Officer the relevant session or sessions as set out in Annex A. Whilst no one has a right to be heard more than once, I will endeavour to allow participation in the sessions requested provided that there is adequate capacity, the representations are relevant to the issues to be discussed, and it would not result in repetitive contributions to the discussions.

Representors who are not seeking changes to the Plan, including those who have made representations supporting it, do not have a right to take part in the hearings.

However, I may invite additional participants if I decide that it would assist me in determining the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan.

### **Supplementary Questions**

If I have any supplementary questions relating to the written statements for any of the matters; new or updated evidence in the examination library; and/or the outcome of the further work being carried out by the Council referred to above, these will be published in advance of the relevant hearing sessions. If so, I will clarify whether I am inviting a written response (and if so from whom and by when), or whether they are solely for discussion at the hearing sessions (along with the previously published matters, issues and questions).

### **Further information**

Further information about the hearing sessions will be published in due course. Agendas will be published a few days before each session.

Any queries about this note should be taken up with the Programme Officer.

*William Fieldhouse*

20 February 2024

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## Provisional Hearings Programme

### Day one: Wednesday 8 May 2024

#### M1. Legal and procedural requirements and other general matters

- 1.1 The duty to cooperate
- 1.2 Public consultation
- 1.3 Equalities
- 1.4 Sustainability appraisal
- 1.5 Habitat regulations assessment
- 1.6 Climate change
- 1.7 Flood risk
- 1.8 Strategic policies and neighbourhood plans (Appendix 6)
- 1.9 Superseded policies in the existing statutory development plan (Appendix 7)
- 1.10 References to supplementary planning documents and other guidance
- 1.11 Definitions (Appendix 9)
- 1.12 Viability
- 1.13 Strategic and local road network (evidence)

### Day two: Thursday 9 May 2024

#### M2. Amount of development needed in the District

- 2.1 Plan period
- 2.2 Housing requirement (policy SP12)
- 2.3 Office floorspace requirement (paragraph 7.40)
- 2.4 Industrial and warehouse floorspace requirements (paragraphs 7.8 and 7.13)

#### M3. Spatial strategy

- 3.1 The spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy (policies SP1, SP3 and App 2)
- 3.2 AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield (policies SP4 and DM33 and App 3)
- 3.3 North Wessex Downs AONB (policy SP2)
- 3.4 Housing requirements for neighbourhood areas (SP12, SP13, SP14 and SP15)
- 3.5 Settlement boundaries (policies SP1 and SP2)
- 3.6 Separation of settlements around Newbury and Thatcham (policy DM2)
- 3.7 Key Diagram
- 3.8 Site selection methodology

**Days three and four: Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 May 2024**

M4. North East Thatcham strategic site (policy SP17)

- 4.1 Reasonable alternatives and West Berkshire Strategic Vision
- 4.2 Infrastructure
- 4.3 Transport infrastructure
- 4.4 Education infrastructure
- 4.5 Health care infrastructure
- 4.6 Community infrastructure
- 4.7 Landscape and green infrastructure
- 4.8 Flood risk and surface water
- 4.9 Air and noise pollution
- 4.10 Affordable homes and housing mix
- 4.11 Self build plots
- 4.12 Biodiversity
- 4.13 Historic environment
- 4.14 Masterplanning and Thatcham Strategic Growth Study
- 4.15 Viability and delivery
- 4.16 Policies map
- 4.17 North East Thatcham map

**Day five: Thursday 23 May 2024**

M5. Sandleford Park strategic site (policy SP16)

- 5.1 West Berkshire Strategic Vision
- 5.2 Transport
- 5.3 Comprehensive development and infrastructure provision
- 5.4 Viability and delivery
- 5.5 Settlement boundary

M6. Non strategic housing allocations

- 6.1 Newbury and Thatcham (policies RSA1 to RSA5)

## **Day six: Tuesday 4 June 2024**

M6. Non strategic housing allocations ctd

6.2 Eastern Area (policies RSA6 to RSA13)

6.3 North Wessex Downs AONB (policies RSA14 to RSA23)

## **Days seven and eight: Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 June 2024**

M7. Housing supply (numbers)

7.1 Allocations in existing plans retained and included in the Plan

7.2 Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan

7.3 Allocations in existing plans at advanced stage of construction

7.4 Unallocated sites with planning permission

7.5 New allocations in the Plan

7.6 Sites to be allocated in neighbourhood plans

7.7 Windfall allowance

7.8 Five year housing land requirement and supply

7.9 Overall housing supply for the plan period

M8. Requirements of housing developers

8.1 Affordable housing (policy SP19)

8.2 Density of housing development (policy SP1)

8.3 Housing type and mix (policy SP18)

8.4 Internal space standards (policy DM30)

8.5 Design quality (policy SP7)

8.6 Sustainable homes (policies SP5 and DM4)

8.7 Water quality, water resources and waste water (policy DM7)

8.8 Green infrastructure and public open space (policies SP10 and DM40)

8.9 Biodiversity and geodiversity (policy SP11)

8.10 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows (policy DM15)

8.11 Residential amenity and gardens (policy DM31)

8.12 Landscape character assessments (policy SP8)

8.13 Statements of heritage significance (policy SP9)

8.14 Health impact assessments (policy DM3)

8.15 Car parking and cycle storage (policy DM44 and Appendix 5)

8.16 Transport impacts and infrastructure (policies SP23, DM42 and DM45)

8.17 Digital infrastructure (policy DM41)

8.18 Infrastructure requirements and delivery (policy SP24)

## **Day nine: Tuesday 11 June 2024**

### M9. Other housing development management policies

- 9.1 First homes exception sites (policy DM16)
- 9.2 Rural exception sites (policy DM17)
- 9.3 Specialised housing (policy DM19)
- 9.4 Mobile home parks (policy DM21)
- 9.5 Residential use above non-residential units (policy DM22)
- 9.6 Residential development in the countryside (policies DM23 to DM27)
- 9.7 Residential extensions and annexes (policies DM28 and DM29)

### M10. Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation

- 10.1 Need for additional gypsy and traveller accommodation (Table 7)
- 10.2 Sites for additional gypsy and traveller accommodation (policies DM20 and RSA24)
- 10.3 Need for additional travelling showpeople accommodation (Table 8)
- 10.4 Sites for additional travelling showpeople accommodation (policy RSA25)

## **Day ten: Wednesday 12 June 2024**

### M11 Economic development

- 11.1 Strategic approach to employment land (policy SP20)
- 11.2 Designated employment areas (policies SP21 and DM32 and Appendix 4)
- 11.3 Sites allocated for economic development (policies SP21 and ESA1 to ESA6)
- 11.4 Office development (policies SP20, SP22 and DM32)
- 11.5 Town centres and retail parks (policies SP22 and DM34)
- 11.6 Economic development in the countryside (policies DM35, DM36 and DM38)
- 11.7 Equestrian development and horseracing industry (policy DM37)
- 11.8 Theale rail-road transfer site (policy DM43)

**Day eleven: Thursday 13 June 2024**

M12. Other development management policies

- 12.1 Non-residential development and carbon emissions (policies SP5 and DM4)
- 12.2 Non-residential development and transport (policies SP23, DM42 and DM44)
- 12.3 Pollution and air quality (policies DM5 and DM8)
- 12.4 Flood risk (policy SP6)
- 12.5 Water quality and resources (policies DM6 and DM7)
- 12.6 Historic environment (policies SP9 and DM9 to DM14)
- 12.7 Community facilities (policy DM39)

M13. Other soundness issues

Next steps in the examination

**Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 June, and Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 July 2024**

Reserve days in case any issues need to be returned to, or additional issues need to be discussed.

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End of Annex A