

Local Plan Review 2022-2039 Proposed Submission (for full Council)

Consultation

These observations are made in a personal capacity, except where reference is made to the West Berkshire Heritage Forum, when I write on behalf of that body, [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

SP2 AONB

This is not a criticism, but the economic success of the AONB landowners and farmers is essential to secure the income by which the AONB can be sustained. A better designation would be “Area of Outstanding Cultivated Landscape”.

SP8 Landscape Character. DM12 Registered Parks and Gardens. DM40 Public Open Spaces

- (i) Maintenance of the landscape will depend on the long term on the owners having both the income and the desire to do so. For major and public landscapes, this is straightforward. For small parcels of land attached to housing estates, diversified ownership is not likely to produce this result. A common policy for maintenance of all publically used landscape is needed.
- (ii) The Berkshire Gardens Trust has a more active role than the draft LPR suggests. It has carried out a survey of historic public parks in Central and East Berkshire, and wishes to extend this to West Berkshire. The Heritage Forum, in consultation with the WBC Heritage Service, will pursue this.

SP9 Historic Environment. DM9 Conservation Areas. DM11 Non-designated Heritage Assets

The general tenor of SP9 is welcomed. A proposal to update the HEAP has been submitted to the Heritage Service, and a response is awaited.

The value of each Conservation Area lies in direct proportion to the extent that a Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared and approved for it. Little or no progress in this regard has taken place. If it is to be rectified, considerably more attention and time will be need to be allocated by the Council, in collaboration with the Heritage Forum, than has been apparent to date.

The support of the Council in extending local listing under the agreement with the Heritage Forum is welcomed. This would be assisted by pointing local parish councils towards the Forum when issues are raised regarding planning permission or proposed developments which may impact on heritage assets.

SP16 Sandford Strategic Site

This section is not consistent with the outline planning consent for 1000 houses for the (eastern) Bloor Homes part of the site. This consent does not include or permit a connection with the (western) Donnington New Homes part, nor an exit via Warren Road, and it must be assumed

that those constraints will continue. The statement that the site is for 1500 houses, with an exit via Warren Road, is therefore not correct. A reversal of this policy would cause unacceptable congestion to the regular Andover Road traffic.

SP20/21 Employment Land. DM32 Designated Employment Areas

It is inferred from the text that the Council plans the use of DEA's to restrain the currently malign use of Permitted Development Rights to convert business premises to residential use in disregard of local plans. If correct, that intention is strongly supported.

SP22 Town and District Centres

West Berkshire town and village centres are with few exceptions governed by Conservation Areas, to which development of the centres should be subject. The above remarks under SP9 therefore apply.

SP23 Transport. DM42 Transport Infrastructure. DM45 Travel Planning

The emphasis in this section on a shift away from car travel should take more account of the movement towards more working from home. More importantly, the objective to reduce emissions will be achieved as much by the transition to electric vehicles, which will become progressively more cost-effective, as by abandonment of car usage. People will continue to wish to travel on short and longer journeys, and the convenience of private motoring will continue to be strongly felt. National policy strongly supports the trend to electric transmission.

The LPR should therefore include a specific plan for the widespread availability of charging points on both private and public premises, existing as well as new.

Judging solely from that part of Newbury where I live, bus travel has had only a limited effect. If it is to be better supported, a more strategic approach may be needed, with a wider range of routes.

The LPR should not exclude new roads and road extensions, should those prove necessary.

SP24 Infrastructure

The outlines of an infrastructure plan should be included in the LPR and not relegated to an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Schools, colleges, GP surgeries, and hospitals are as important to the development and wellbeing of the district as housing, landscape, heritage, business, and transport. There should be a specific reference to primary, secondary, and tertiary education and the means to ensure their delivery

DM13 Registered Battlefields

The 1644 Second Battle of Newbury was as historically significant as the 1643 First Battle, as it resulted directly in the formation of Cromwell's New Model Army, with which he was able

to win the Civil War. The site of the Second Battle is therefore as deserving of being designated a Registered Battlefield as the site of the First Battle. Unfortunately, the more extensive development of the Second Battle site, which is currently unprotected, has prevented this happening.

The Heritage Forum would be happy to work with the Council to at least locally list the site of the Second Battle, in collaboration with the Battlefields Trust, which will require legal support which only the Council has available.

DM39 Local Community Facilities

The availability of meeting places for voluntary groups and exhibitions is a welcome objective.

Anthony Pick
4th January 2023