

The Council's strategy for a Formal Review of the Local Plan

The four recommendations of the Report on the Local Plan were approved at the Full Council meeting last week. These included a Formal Review of the Local Plan which is scheduled for 2024. In the meanwhile we will continue to look at the evidence base, an essential first step before the Review. This includes:

- understanding retail, leisure and employment changes in our borough
- working with Surrey County Council and National Highways to review the transport evidence
- developing our plans for the town centre through Shaping Guildford's Future

The Council is mindful of the Government's Standard Method of determining the target housing number which could be imposed on Guildford at the time of a Formal Review which may result in a much higher target number than is currently the case. This was one of the key points made by a leading planning barrister who advised the Council on devising the best approach to the Review.

We will continue developing the second part of the plan, the Local Plan: Development Management Policies. These policies will help support our decisions on planning applications and guide developers as soon as they are adopted.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, said: "The debate on when to review the Local Plan was very difficult, we could all see both sides of the argument. The legal advice that we received was difficult for many of us to hear. Our decision, whichever one we made, was going to have important consequences. However, I believe this is the right decision for the borough as a whole. Sadly there are some areas that are much more affected by the current Local Plan than others.

"There are a number of factors that could cause the balance of risk to change and we must be nimble to take advantage of any opportunity. The government proposals to change housing need calculations and changes to the plan making system may cause us to revisit our approach. If there are significant changes before 2024, we must be able to respond swiftly.

"We are also moving forward with projects like Shaping Guildford's Future, our proposals for the town centre and the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document that will help us protect the land and character of villages in our borough.

"On Tuesday we also adopted the West Clandon Neighbourhood Plan. We now have 8 neighbourhood plans, which gives communities the opportunity to plan their local area and decide what it should look like. Together these policies and projects put the power in the hands of local people in guiding future plan making and development across our borough."

The National Planning Policy Framework sets an expectation that each local authority produces a local plan. They help govern decisions made on future planning applications and which types of development are suitable for each area.

The Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2015 - 2034) was adopted in 2019. The second part, the Local Plan: Development Management Policies, sets out the detailed development management policies for the

whole borough. Comments from our consultation that ended in February 2022 are being reviewed by the Planning Policy team. The plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration by a Planning Inspector as part of the Local Plan examination.