



**WORTHING BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

## **Worthing Local Plan (WLP)**

### **Update on Main Modifications Consultation**

#### **What is a Local Plan?**

As Members are aware a Local Plan is a Development Plan that balances the benefits of growth against the potential impact of future development and the need to protect the environment. To do this it needs to:

- aim to meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure needs
- identify land where development would be appropriate / inappropriate
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment

Local Plan must be based on the latest evidence and be in line with national policy. They cover many land uses like homes, businesses, retail, transport, community facilities and green infrastructure. They contain a Vision and a set of associated economic, social and environmental objectives. Local Plans also include new land use allocations and policies which will be used to assess planning proposals.

#### **Local Context**

The existing Development Plan for Worthing is the Worthing Core Strategy which was adopted in 2011. Since 2016, the Council has been working hard to prepare a new development plan, called the Worthing Local Plan, which will have a big influence on the Borough for the next 15 years.

The new Local Plan will cover most of Worthing Borough. However, unlike the existing Core Strategy, it will not cover the land in the north of the Borough that lies within the South Downs National Park. The National Park Authority is a planning authority in their own right and they have their own Local Plan.

In line with the requirements of the duty to co-operate Worthing Borough Council has worked with partners and local authorities to consider a range of cross boundary issues.

A significant amount of evidence has been prepared to support the emerging WLP and all key documents can be viewed on the [evidence base](#) page of the Council's website. To ensure the social, environmental and economic impacts of policies are assessed a [sustainability appraisal](#) is being progressed as part of the plan preparation process.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

Plans can only be truly successful if they are rooted in local knowledge. To achieve this the Plan goes through a number of formal and informal stages of consultation.

- Issues and Options Stage (2016) - The document, titled 'Your Town - Your Future', identified the challenges facing the borough and sought views and suggestions on how Worthing should grow and develop in the future.
- Draft Local Plan (2018) - Comments received at the Issues & options stage, along with evidence, helped to inform the draft WLP which set out the Council's preferred options.
- Submission Draft Local Plan - The comments submitted at the previous consultation stages, alongside a comprehensive evidence base, helped to shape the Submission Draft which the Council considered to be 'sound'.

## **Submission and Examination**

The WLP was formally submitted to the Secretary of State on Friday 11th June 2021 for independent examination. An Inspector was appointed on behalf of the Secretary of State and his role is to consider the soundness of the submitted plan and whether it is legally compliant.

Following Submission of the WLP the Council responded to numerous issues and matters raised by the Inspector. The Examination Hearing Sessions were held in public over three weeks in November.

## **Current Stage (Modifications)**

Following the close of the Hearing Sessions, the Council received the [Inspector's Post Hearing Advice Letter](#) which sets out the proposed changes or Main Modifications (MMs) needed to ensure that the Worthing Local Plan is legally compliant and passes the government's tests of 'soundness'. In response, the Council prepared a Schedule of proposed Main Modifications and associated documents. These were published for consultation on April 5<sup>th</sup>. It is important to note that this is a focussed consultation relating just to the proposed Main Modifications and related documents and that this is not an opportunity to comment on or object to other areas of the Plan which remain unchanged.

The consultation period closes at midnight on 17<sup>th</sup> May. As this is after this note was prepared a verbal update summarising the representations will be provided at the Planning Committee meeting. At the time of writing this report only 7 representations have been received and none of these raise any substantive concerns on the Modifications proposed to the Plan considered at the Examination in Public.

## **Next Steps**

All representations on the Modifications will be sent to the Inspector who will consider them before finalising the examination report. Normally, all issues arising from the consultation on the MMs should be capable of being considered through the written representations procedure. Further hearing sessions will only be necessary exceptionally.

We expect that we may receive the Inspector's Final Report in late summer. If, as we hope, the Plan is found to be 'sound' we will ask Council in the autumn to formally adopt the WLP as the Council's development plan. When in place, the new Plan will replace the borough's existing local planning policies and will be an important consideration in deciding planning applications.

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## **Further Information:**

Worthing Local Plan - <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/worthing-local-plan/>

Worthing Planning Policy - <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/planning-policy/worthing/>

## **Contact**

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