

Emerging Local Plan progress and next steps

1. The Borough Council formally submitted its Local Plan in March 2022 for independent examination. In doing so we made a formal request to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) that the appointed Inspectors recommend any modifications required to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound.

Examination hearings (December 2022 – April 2024)

2. The Local Plan examination process commenced as soon as the Plan was submitted in March 2022. The Local Plan is being examined with reference to legal compliance and the following “soundness” tests, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):
 - a) **Positively prepared** – meeting Borough’s objectively assessed development needs;
 - b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account reasonable alternatives and based on proportionate evidence;
 - c) **Effective** – deliverable and achievable over the plan period; and
 - d) **Consistent with national policy** (NPPF).
3. Submission was followed by a first round of hearings which took place in December 2022 and January 2023. These were then adjourned, with reconvened hearings taking place in March and April 2024. Through the examination hearings a number of significant changes have been proposed, including to the plan period; amended to 2021-2040.
4. Following the March/ April 2024 hearings, an accelerated timescale through to adoption was agreed and has been published ([LPTG, 14 May 2024](#)). This will enable adoption of the Local Plan before the conclusion of this financial year (March 2025).
5. The examination hearings (except for matters relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, which were subject to separate hearings, on 3 and 4 September 2024) concluded in April 2024. The hearings were followed by agreement by the Planning Inspectors for the Council to publish the Main Modifications and supporting documents for consultation; the penultimate stage of the process.

Main Modifications (Part 1) consultation (August – October 2024)

6. Once the Inspectors had approved the Main Modifications these (Main Modifications schedules and supporting documents) were published for consultation. This consultation is taking place over 8 weeks (closing date, 2

October 2024). To be “duly made” (valid), consultation responses need to relate to specific Main Modifications. Other issues related to the Local Plan will not be considered. Full details are set out on the [Local Plan examination](#) web page.

7. The consultation is ongoing; further information regarding the Main Modifications are set out in a separate report (**Agenda Item xx**). As of 30 August 2024, a number of representations have been received regarding the following:
 - MM5 – Spatial strategy (approach to development on brownfield land)
 - MM115 and MM116 – West Winch Growth Area infrastructure triggers; e.g. West Winch Housing Access Road, new primary school provision.
8. Further representations are expected to be received throughout September. These will inform the Inspectors Local Plan Report. It is anticipated that this will recommend that the Local Plan can be adopted subject to the inclusion of Main Modifications (as proposed by the Inspectors). Following this a report will be prepared and taken to Cabinet and Full Council recommending that the Local Plan be formally adopted (February / March 2025).

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (autumn 2024)

9. Local Plan policies regarding Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are being dealt with separately to the remainder of the Local Plan. These have been subject to two previous consultations, firstly regarding potential site allocations and draft policies (January – March 2024), followed by proposed site allocations and policies (10 May – 21 June 2024). Representations from the latter consultation were submitted to the Planning Inspectors and were the subject of examination hearings (3 and 4 September 2024).
10. The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople examination hearings were undertaken with reference to a series of Matters, Issues and Questions, for which the Borough Council had previously prepared written responses ([K31 - Matter 6: BCKLWN Response to MIQs \(MIQ416 - MIQ462\)](#)). The Inspectors considered these, alongside representations received as part of the recent “Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People proposed site allocations and policies” consultation (10 May – 21 June 2024).
11. Following the September 2024 examination hearings, a further Main Modifications (Part 2) consultation will take place, regarding Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (October – November 2024). Following this, representation will be submitted to the Inspectors.

Final stages (January – March 2025)

12. The Inspectors will consider consultation responses through the Main Modifications consultations, together with previous evidence considered since submission of the Local Plan. This will inform their final report, which it is expected will be delivered in early 2025. This timetable will allow adoption of the Plan by March 2025.
13. Following receipt and publication of the Inspectors' Report, the Local Plan will be taken to Cabinet and Full Council, with a recommendation that the Local Plan 2021-2040 be adopted.