

Full Council report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director of Planning and Regeneration

Author: Stuart Harrison

Tel: 01483 444512

Email: stuart.harrison@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Paul Spooner

Tel: 07970 953232

Email: paul.spooner@guildford.gov.uk

Date: 16 May 2017

Proposed Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites June 2017

Executive Summary

The Proposed Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites (2017) (“the draft Local Plan”) outlines the spatial development strategy for the borough up to 2034. The draft Local Plan sets out the quantum and location of development based on an evaluation of our objectively assessed need (OAN) for new homes, employment and retail space and an assessment of whether this quantum of development can be provided in a sustainable way following consideration of other policy constraints. The conclusion reached is that appropriate sustainable sites can be allocated within the plan to meet the OAN for both housing and employment.

The draft Local Plan is also concerned with the protection and enhancement of our environment, the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support the planned growth of the borough and the promotion of sustainable transport.

This updated draft Local Plan (2017) contains significant changes from the Draft Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites (June 2016). The changes reflect consideration of representations received through the consultation process, changes in circumstances and changes to the evidence base. Following advice from the Planning Inspectorate, it is considered necessary to carry out a further consultation specifically focussed on just the proposed changes to the plan in advance of submitting the document to the Secretary of State. This is described as a targeted consultation.

It is proposed to consult on the draft updated Local Plan for six weeks commencing 9 June 2017. Following this period, all comments and representations relating to changes made to the 2016 plan during the consultation period will be considered. Consideration will then be given to any amendments deemed to be necessary to the plan and a decision taken on whether to consult further or to formally submit the plan to the Secretary of State.

The Draft Local Plan (Appendix 3) is structured around four central themes closely linked to the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan (2015-2020). Policies are grouped into one of the following categories: strategic, housing, protecting, economy, design, and infrastructure and delivery.

The purpose of this report is to outline what the draft Local Plan is, how the document has evolved from the previous document and the next steps in the plan-making process.

Recommendation to Council:

- (1) That the draft Local Plan: strategy and sites document be approved for formal public consultation for a six week period beginning Friday 9 June 2017, such consultation to focus specifically on the proposed changes highlighted in the document.
- (2) That the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Planning and Regeneration, to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the document as she may deem necessary.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

The draft Local Plan amends the Council's previously published Guildford borough Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2016) in light of representations received and the evolving evidence base. It provides a coherent approach to future development and allocates sites to accommodate sustainable development in the borough up to 2034. The document is considered to be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

The recommendations above are made to encourage the Council to:

- (1) Enable the draft Local Plan: strategy and sites document to be published for public consultation.
- (2) Allow officers to undertake public consultation in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015, the National Planning Practice Guidance, and the adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2013 known as Community Engagement in Planning.

Undertaking a public consultation on the draft Local Plan is a statutory requirement placed on Local Planning Authorities under Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and will enable the Council to move a step closer to adopting an up-to-date Local Plan.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The draft Local Plan must undergo a number of statutory processes, including public consultation, in order to progress towards an examination in public and eventual adoption. This report seeks Full Council authority to publish the draft Local Plan document (see Appendix 3) for consultation for a period of six weeks

(commencing 9 June 2017) and to allow for any minor amendments or typographical changes to be made following the Council meeting.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The production of the draft Local Plan is a statutory requirement and will help the Council meet its strategic priorities. Once adopted, the Local Plan will enable the Council to provide for the needs of the community whilst promoting the area as a visitor destination, enhancing the rural and urban economy and protecting the borough's special built and natural environment. The Plan is therefore vital to achieving the Council's ambition to improve our society for the benefit of all residents. Whilst seeking to meet needs we have applied appropriate constraints and will ensure that growth is conditional upon the delivery of all crucial infrastructure, without which it would be unsustainable.
- 2.2 The draft Local Plan sets out a vision for the borough closely aligned to that included within the Council's Strategic Framework. The draft Local Plan will provide a framework for development in the borough to ensure that Guildford's growth is sustainable and meets the needs of the existing and future populations. It is based upon thirteen strategic objectives, which are framed within one of the following four core themes: society, environment, economy and infrastructure. These strategic objectives build upon the five fundamental themes identified in the Council's Strategic Framework.

3. Background

- 3.1 The current Local Plan – the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 – was adopted in January 2003. Policies from the 2003 Local Plan were 'saved' for development management purposes pursuant to the transitional provisions set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act). Once the new Local Plan: strategy and sites is adopted, it will, where relevant, supersede the various saved policies from the 2003 Local Plan. The second part of the new Local Plan will provide policies that relate to development management matters. The two constituent development plan documents of the new Local Plan – 'strategy and sites' and 'development management' – will, once adopted, supersede all of the saved 2003 policies.
- 3.2 The policies of the draft Local Plan have been prepared to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) and the Localism Act 2011 (including the Duty to Cooperate). In preparing the draft Local Plan, officers have also had regard to requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012). The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) has also been used as a guide throughout the plan-making process.
- 3.3 There are significant challenges in preparing a new Local Plan and the statutory process is complex and lengthy. It will also require some difficult decisions and choices; however, preparing a new Local Plan that is capable of being found sound will enable us to plan positively for our future and ensure that the borough remains successful and vibrant.

- 3.4 It is also important that we maintain progress on the Local Plan. This will ensure a greater level of certainty for service providers, residents and developers. Any significant delays would also lead to a greater risk of Government intervention.
- 3.5 Whilst maintaining good progress it is imperative that we prepare a plan that is capable of being found sound at examination by an independent planning inspector. We will also need to demonstrate that we have met our legal Duty to Cooperate. This requires that we have engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with our neighbours and a set of prescribed bodies on cross boundary strategic matters. Should we fail this legal test, it cannot be rectified through the examination process. The plan would therefore be found unsound and we would need to restart the local plan process.

4. Changes to the Draft Plan

Responses received

- 4.1 During last year's consultation, we received approximately 32,000 comments from approximately 6,000 individuals and bodies. We have since processed and assigned all the comments to the appropriate section of the plan or evidence base, and analysed them to understand whether they necessitate a change. We have also redacted all inappropriate comments and have since published them via our online consultation system. All comments have been available to view since 22 February 2017.
- 4.2 There was ongoing concern regarding development in the Green Belt, a perceived lack of infrastructure provision to support development and the robustness of our evidence base. There were also some detailed comments in relation to the policy wording and site allocations.
- 4.3 As a result of the consultation comments and an updated evidence base, we consider it is necessary to make a number of changes to the draft Local Plan. Some of these changes are significant in nature and for that reason require further consultation. Following discussions with the Planning Inspectorate, we have also taken the opportunity to make minor changes so that the plan submitted for examination is the plan we wish to see adopted.

Further targeted Regulation 19 consultation

- 4.4 We adopted a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) on 21 February 2017. This document sets out the stages and timetable for plan preparation. It indicates that in order to undertake a further Regulation 19 targeted consultation, the timetable has slipped by exactly one year. We propose to undertake the additional consultation for a period of 6 weeks in June/July 2017. Following this consultation, we will review all the duly made comments made to ensure that the Local Plan we submit to the Secretary of State is sound. The LDS indicates that we hope to submit in December 2017.

- 4.5 The forthcoming consultation supplements and is in addition to the Regulation 19 Local Plan (2016) consultation. All comments made to the previous consultation, alongside the comments from this summer's consultation, will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. For this reason, we will only be considering comments that relate to parts of the plan or evidence base that have changed since the last consultation.
- 4.6 All comments made last year to the parts of the plan that have not changed are still relevant and therefore do not need to be resubmitted as part of the forthcoming consultation. We have sought advice from the Planning Inspectorate who has advised us that comments made to parts of the plan that are unchanged should be considered not duly made. We will ensure that communications surrounding the consultation are clear to ensure that there is understanding regarding the purpose and remit of this targeted Regulation 19 consultation.

Updates to the evidence base

- 4.7 We have, where necessary and appropriate, selectively updated and added to our evidence base. The vote to leave the European Union resulted in a decision by the administration to revisit the 'needs' studies relating to Housing, Employment and Retail and Leisure to take account of the post Brexit economic forecasts.
- West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Guildford Addendum: this sits alongside and supplements the West Surrey SHMA (2015). It provides a factual update for Guildford to include consideration of the latest population and household projections, the latest economic projections and the latest mid-year population estimate. The document is available to view at: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/16277
 - Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA): this updates the previous ELNA (2015) with the latest full set of post-Brexit economic projections. These projections have also fed into the SHMA addendum. The document is available to view at: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/economy
 - Retail and Leisure Needs Study Addendum: this sits alongside and supplements the Retail and Leisure Study update 2014. It provides a factual update to include the latest population projections and Experian forecasts. The document is available to view at: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/economy
- 4.8 In addition to the above, we have updated or prepared the following evidence based documents:
- Travellers Accommodation Assessment (TAA): this updates the previous TAA (2012) and takes account of recent changes in legislation. The document is available to view at: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/16277
 - Water Quality Assessment: this has been prepared to address comments raised by the Environment Agency. This document will be available in time for the consultation.

- Air Quality review: this has been prepared to help inform the Sustainability Appraisal and site allocations. This document will be available in time for the consultation.

4.9 To understand the implications of changes to the draft Local Plan it has also been necessary to review and update the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (draft included in Appendix 4) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) (final report included in Appendix 5).

4.10 We will also be updating the various topic papers that were prepared to supplement last year's consultation. Each topic paper focuses on a particular theme and sets out the relevant considerations and justification for the approach taken in the Local Plan. They will help explain where there have been changes and justify any new approach. These documents will all be available in time for the consultation.

Changes to policies

4.11 As a result of the SHMA addendum, the plan period has been rebased to the latest mid-year population estimate and rolled forward by one year to ensure a period of 15 years at the date of adoption (2015 – 2034). The plan period is therefore now 19 years whereas previously it was 20 years. Policy S2 which sets out the spatial strategy for the borough has been updated to reflect the revised needs figures in the evidence base and a reconsideration of sites. The table below summarises the change in growth requirements between the two regulation 19 iterations of the plan.

	2016 Reg 19 Local Plan (2013 – 33)	2017 Reg 19 Local Plan (2015 – 34)
Housing	13,860	12,426
Office and research and development floorspace	37,200 – 47,200 sq m	36,100 – 43,700 sq m
Industrial employment land	4.7 – 5.3 hectares	3.7 – 4.1 hectares
Comparison retail floorspace	46,955* sq m	41,000 sq m**
Gypsy and traveller pitches	73 pitches	58 pitches***
Travelling Showpeople plots	8 plots	8 plots

*due to uncertainties in forecasting over the longer term we are proposing to meet needs to 2029

**due to uncertainties in forecasting over the longer term we are proposing to meet needs to 2030

***Whilst this appears to be a significant drop, in reality it is not. The previous TAA (2012) assessed need to 2027 whilst the new TAA (2017) assesses need to 2034. Since 2012 a number of permissions have also been granted for traveller pitches which has reduced the identified need.

- 4.12 The remainder of the policies have undergone changes too. Appendix 1 provides a brief summary of the key changes to each policy and changes to Appendix C: Infrastructure Schedule. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the key changes to the Appendix H: Maps.
- 4.13 Some of the policy changes have been significant and include:
- additional requirements to the policy (e.g. requiring a proportion of accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible homes in Policy H1)
 - Clarification on how the policy will be applied (e.g. replacement of 'we will expect' with 'will be required' in Policy ID3)
- 4.14 However, most are relatively minor changes that do not alter the intention of the policy but:
- improve readability or clarity
 - ensures greater consistency between the policies
 - responds to specific comments made during the last consultation

Changes to site allocations

- 4.15 The Regulation 19 Local Plan (2016) site allocations excluded any land that had been granted planning permission. A key change in the Regulation 19 Local Plan (2017) is that site allocations will now include sites with planning permission where these have yet to be commenced. The reason for doing so is to ensure that the policy context for these sites is clear should the permission expire. It provides greater certainty for the uses proposed on the site and our ability to count this as part of our supply. It is also more transparent for anyone looking at the plan to understand where growth is planned to occur.
- 4.16 The lower requirement for homes has been reflected in a number of site changes, including a number of sites that have been removed from the plan. We consider there are valid planning reasons for doing so, such as new evidence or a change in circumstance, which means they are not able to contribute towards meeting the unmet needs within the housing market area¹. We outline below where there have been significant changes to the site allocations.

Site allocation A4: Telephone Exchange, Leapale Road, Guildford

- 4.17 The site was allocated for 100 homes. The Land Availability Assessment (LAA) acknowledged that the site was not available presently but identified it as having potential for redevelopment towards the end of the plan period given its location in the town centre. We have since had confirmation from the landowners of the site that, due to the current uses on the site and the cost of relocation, the site is not considered to be developable within the plan period.

¹ There is currently identified unmet housing need of 3,150 homes (2013/14 – 2026/2027) as a result of a shortfall in Woking Borough Council's planned supply in their adopted Core Strategy (2012) when assessed against their OAN of 517 homes per year (2013 – 2033)

Site allocation A6: North Street redevelopment, Guildford

- 4.18 The site was allocated for 45,000 sq m of comparison retail floorspace, 3,000 sq m of food and drink and 200 homes. To reflect the latest retail needs study and evidence of demand, the comparison retail floorspace has been decreased to 41,000 sq m whilst the food and drink element has been increased to 6,000 sq m. The housing capacity has also been increased to up to 400 homes with the caveat that should it be demonstrated that this overall scale of development cannot be appropriately accommodated on the site, the residential element will need to be reduced to ensure that retail needs are met.

Site allocation A18: Land at Guildford College, Guildford

- 4.19 The site was allocated for 100 homes. However, since the last iteration of the plan we have had confirmation from the site promoters that they are intending to progress a student accommodation scheme rather than one comprising of general homes. It is now proposed to be allocated for 200 student bedspaces.

Site allocation A29: Land to the south and east of Ash and Tongham

- 4.20 The overall scale of growth in this strategic location for development has remained consistent but the capacity of the allocation has been increased from 1,200 to 1,750 homes. The site allocation now includes the various planning permissions in this area that have not yet commenced due to the current unavailability of sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). A further change for this allocation is the requirement for the land and provision of the new road bridge and footbridge to enable closure of the level crossing at Ash railway station (previously allocated separately in site allocation A30)

Site allocation A34: Broadford Business Park, Shalford

- 4.21 This site was allocated for 100 homes. Since the last iteration of the plan we have reconsidered how we intend to best meet both housing and employment needs. Given the loss of employment sites to housing that has already occurred due to permitted development rights, which is expected to continue, we are concerned at our ability to provide sufficient and varied office floorspace. Broadford is an established business park and, whilst not sequentially preferable, is considered suitable given our inability to identify sufficient sequentially preferable sites. The vast majority of our office floorspace is proposed to be allocated on the extension to the Surrey Research Park – retention of Broadford will help provide a variety and mix of floorspace.

Site allocation A36: Hotel, Guildford Road, East Horsley

- 4.22 This site was allocated for 48 homes. It was the subject of a recent appeal for the loss of the hotel and redevelopment for up to 49 dwellings. As part of this process, the inspector concluded that insufficient evidence had been prepared to justify the loss of the hotel. For this reason, it is considered that the site should be removed from the plan and the hotel use on it continue to be protected until such time as further evidence is presented that satisfactorily demonstrates that the loss would be in accordance with current planning policy.

Site allocation A41: Land to the south of West Horsley

- 4.23 This site was allocated for 90 homes. Through the consultation process, it has become known that the landowner of a significant part of the site has proposed to gift the land necessary to relocate the existing Raleigh School and associated playing fields onto this site.
- 4.24 At present, there is considerable uncertainty regarding the deliverability of this proposal. We therefore consider that there are not the exceptional circumstances that justify removing this site from the Green Belt and allocating it for the relocated school. Should there be greater certainty in the future then this could be progressed outside of the Local Plan through the planning application process accepting there is the requirement to demonstrate very special circumstances.

Site allocation A43: Land at Garlick's Arch, Send Marsh Burnt Common and Ripley

- 4.25 The site was allocated for 400 homes and 7,000 sq m of industrial land. Given concerns raised during the consultation process regarding the appropriateness of allocating a site for both housing and industrial uses, we have removed the industrial element from this allocation. The Travelling Showpeople plots that have been lost as a result of the removal of site allocation A46 (discussed below) is now proposed to be met on this site.

Site allocation A46: Land to the south of Normandy and north of Flexford

- 4.26 This site was allocated for 1,100 homes, six Travelling Showpeople plots and a mix of other uses. It is a high sensitivity Green Belt site which was only proposed to be allocated previously on the basis of its ability to provide the secondary school required to meet the development needs arising in the west of the borough. Since the previous consultation, the promoters of Blackwell Farm have now confirmed that they are willing to provide a secondary school on their site. Blackwell Farm is a preferable location in relation to both school place planning and sustainability perspectives, and was only discounted previously on the basis that the site was not available for education provision.
- 4.27 Given the site consists of the whole land parcel assessed to be high sensitivity Green Belt, the allocation of this land would result in significant harm to the Green Belt. However great weight was given to allocating a site that could provide an eight form entry secondary school in the west of the borough. Whilst there would continue to be some sustainability benefits associated with the allocation of the site in relation to additional services, given the other harm we do not consider that this is justified without the benefits associated with the provision of the secondary school.

Site allocation A47: Land to the east of the Paddocks, Flexford

- 4.28 This site was allocated for 50 homes. Since the consultation, it has been resurveyed and is considered to still be worthy of a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) status. This is due to the semi-improved grassland habitat which is not compatible with development. Given this habitat has declined dramatically

across the country, it is considered important and worthy of continued designation and protection.

Site allocation A48: Land at Home Farm, Effingham

- 4.29 This site now has planning permission for six rural exception traveller pitches, which are now under construction. It is therefore no longer necessary to allocate this land; however, the site is still being counted as part of our supply.

Site allocation A58: Land around Burnt Common warehouse, London Road, Send

- 4.30 This is a new site which is proposed to be allocated for the 7,000 sq m of industrial land previously proposed on site allocation A43: Garlick's Arch. This site is adjacent to an existing industrial use and is in a less sensitive location to accommodate the proposed uses on its site. The site does have potential capacity for additional floorspace which could be justified through future borough needs assessments.

Site allocation A59: New rail station at Guildford West (Park Barn)

- 4.31 A new rail station at Guildford West was included in Appendix C: Infrastructure Schedule in the Reg 19 Local Plan (2016). To aid clarity and to provide a degree of certainty, the site has been included as a site allocation within the Reg 19 Local Plan (2017).

Delivery on strategic sites within the plan period

- 4.32 Since the consultation of the Regulation 19 Local Plan (2016), we have also reconsidered the delivery profile for our strategic urban extensions around Guildford, namely Blackwell Farm and Gosden Hill. One of the key reasons for the 14% buffer in the Regulation 19 Local Plan (2016) was to ensure delivery of our housing target should these sites not deliver in full during the plan period. There was always some uncertainty regarding the delivery rates assumed on these sites given their dependency on the Road Investment Strategy scheme for the improvement of the A3 through Guildford and the expected timescales for implementing it. Upon reflection, and through continued discussions with the site promoters, we consider that a more robust approach would be to assume more realistic phasing with delivery of part of these sites beyond the plan period. Doing so also justifies a reduction in the buffer (14% down to approximately 10%) as there is less uncertainty in relation to our ability to meet our housing requirement compared to the previous plan which was based on (more optimistic) delivery assumptions.
- 4.33 This phased approach follows a similar one already taken at Slyfield Area Regeneration Project (SARP) in the Regulation 19 Local Plan (2016). This assumed delivery of 1,000 homes within the plan period whilst the overall site capacity is approximately 1,500 homes. Whilst there is greater certainty in relation to our ability to delivery our revised housing requirement, we still consider a buffer of 10% is robust and demonstrates that the plan has sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, as required by paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

- 4.34 It is worth noting that assuming a longer phasing profile on these sites beyond 2034 does not reduce our supply in the early years of the plan period. It is also important to note that whilst we are assuming a more conservative and realistic delivery rate in our housing trajectory, we are not attempting to artificially constrain each site's delivery should the market and the necessary infrastructure improvements enable them to be built earlier. For this reason, they are still proposed to be allocated for their full capacity with the associated level of infrastructure requirements rather than being designated as 'safeguarded' land, which would require a Local Plan review to bring forward the additional land.

5 Consultations

- 5.1 The draft Local Plan has evolved from the Council's Issues and Options Paper (2013), Draft Local Plan (2014) and the 2016 Proposed Submission version. If the Council permit the publication of the draft Submission Local Plan 2017, the document will also undergo a six-week public consultation period.
- 5.2 In producing the draft Local Plan, officers have undertaken a series of ward member briefings. These meetings have facilitated discussion between officers and members regarding the strategic approach to development adopted in the draft Local Plan and ward specific matters.
- 5.3 Key issues relevant to the draft Local Plan have also been discussed by officers and members in regular Local Plan Panel meetings.
- 5.4 The document has also been considered by the Borough, Economy and Infrastructure Executive Advisory Board whose comments are contained in Section 6 below.
- 5.5 The document will be considered by the Executive at its special meeting to be held at 10am on 16 May 2017. The Executive's recommendations will be set out in the Order paper and reported to the Council.

6 Borough, Economy and Infrastructure Executive Advisory Board comments

- 6.1 The Board met on 20 April 2017 and was invited to provide views/comment on the changes made to the draft Local Plan.
- 6.2 The Board agreed to request the Executive, at its special meeting on 16 May 2017, to take into account the following recommendation in relation to the proposed submission Local Plan:
- (1) That the draft Local Plan as submitted to the Board, be approved for formal public consultation for a period of six weeks beginning 9 June 2017 – 24 July 2017 subject to the following proviso:
 - (2) To amend policy A35, page 240 of the agenda, as follows:

“This is a residential led mixed use development, allocated for:

Approximately **Up to** 2000 homes (C3), including some specialist housing and self-build plots, and...”

Officers’ response

The use of a maximum figure on the site allocation at Wisley

- 6.3 All the site allocations for residential development, with the exception of North Street, are worded to say the site is allocated for approximately xxx homes. Without the detail required for a planning application these allocations represent an approximate figure that could be accommodated on site. They are not intended to represent a maximum or minimum level of development for the site. We do not have the detailed information to justify such an approach.
- 6.4 In the case of North Street the ‘up to 400 homes’ is a reflection of the fact that this is a mixed use site that needs to deliver a significant element of retail floorspace to meet identified need and this should not be reduced and replaced with additional residential units.
- 6.5 The site area of the Wisley scheme has been increased within this iteration of the plan but the approximate number of homes has not. Officers consider it would be inconsistent to amend the wording on the Wisley site in relation to the rest of the site allocations.

7 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 All public authorities are required by the Equality Act 2010 to specifically consider the likely impact of their policy, procedure or practice on certain groups in society.
- 7.2 It is our responsibility to ensure that our policies, procedures and service delivery do not discriminate, including indirectly, on any sector of society. Council policies, procedures and service delivery may have differential impacts on certain groups with protected characteristics, and these will be highlighted in the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening. Likely differential impacts must be highlighted, and described, as some may be positive. Where likely significant adverse differential impacts are identified, consideration should be given to opportunities to reduce or mitigate this through a full equalities impact assessment.
- 7.3 An EqIA screening was carried out for the Draft Local Plan (July 2014). This document has been reviewed in light of the further changes to the Local Plan. It is not considered necessary to carry out a full EqIA.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Since 2009, the Council has spent £2.385 million on developing the draft Local Plan. There is a budget of £308,200 for 2017-18 to ensure that the Local Plan continues to develop in line with the timetable in the Local Development Scheme. We estimate a budget of £377,500 for 2018/19 to support the Development Management Policy Document that will underpin the Local Plan. Total anticipated expenditure to the end of 2019/20 is £3.421 million.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 After submission to the Secretary of State, the draft Local Plan will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector. The Inspector will consider whether the Council has fulfilled its legal Duty to Cooperate and whether the plan meets the tests of soundness as set out in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”).
- 9.2 There are various potential risks to the plan being found sound, and it may be vulnerable to a legal challenge by way of Judicial Review on grounds such as procedural defect or flaw, or failure to take into account any relevant material consideration. In either case, it is essential that the Council can demonstrate that it has observed the procedural steps and requirements set out in the relevant Regulations. These include not only the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, but also the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programme Regulations 2004 and possibly also the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 9.3 The Council will also need to demonstrate that it has observed the current requirements of the NPPF and the relevant National Planning Policy Guidance , as well as creating and maintaining an up to date and proportionate evidence base to inform its policy decisions. The evidence base includes the documents that show objectively assessed need within the Borough. The NPPF makes it clear that one of the Government’s objectives is to boost significantly the supply of housing. Without a housing target that the Planning Inspector considers satisfactory, it is unlikely that the draft Local Plan will be found sound.
- 9.4 The failure to adopt a new Local Plan and the reliance on an out of date plan makes the Council less able to focus development in areas that meet wider strategic objectives. Furthermore the Government has announced that where Local Plan progress is not considered acceptable the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government may intervene.
- 9.5 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to produce and adopt a Local Plan. The plan will ultimately replace the current Borough Local Plan adopted in 2003.

10 Human Resource Implications

- 10.1 Consultants have been procured to assist with the consultation process. The process will include a relatively small amount of weekend and evening work for members of the team. Following consultation there will be a process of recording and evaluation the responses received. In past consultations, this has involved employing additional temporary staff to help with the administration involved in processing more than 30,000 representations. It is hoped the targeted consultation will result in fewer overall representations, but this cannot be guaranteed.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 Using consultation comments received from the draft Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites 2016, emerging evidence, and national policy and guidance, officers have produced the draft Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites 2017. The document is considered to meet the test of soundness of the NPPF, provide a strong overarching framework for development in the borough up to 2034 and reflect local circumstances. Publishing the draft Local Plan for public consultation is a key stage of the Local Plan making process and will enable the Local Plan to progress towards submission to the Secretary of State and finally full adoption.

12 Background Papers

- 12.1 The draft Submission Local Plan (2016) can be accessed from the Council's website via the Council's website: www.guildford.gov.uk/draftlocalplan
- 12.2 Officers are currently in the process of producing topic papers which appraise the approach adopted in each policy of the draft Local Plan. These documents are currently unavailable to view but will be available for the start of the consultation period.
- 12.3 All evidence base documents are available to view at www.guildford.gov.uk/researchandvidence

13 Appendices

A summary of changes and reasons for the changes to the policies and Appendix C: infrastructure schedule is attached as Appendix 1.

A summary of key changes and reasons for the changes to the maps is attached as Appendix 2.

The draft Local Plan is attached as Appendix 3.

Draft Sustainability Appraisal is attached as Appendix 4.

Draft Habitat Regulations Assessment is attached as Appendix 5.

Statement of Representations is attached as Appendix 6.