

Wokingham Borough Council

Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy Consultation, November 2021

Great Langborough Resident's Association briefing

This document has been prepared from edited contents of the brief for the WBC Executive Councillor meeting of 12th November 2021 and other public documents. GLRA comments are italicised to distinguish them from original WBC content.

The council consulted on a Draft Local Plan in February 2020. A central plank of the Draft Local Plan was the creation of a garden town at Grazeley. Subsequent to agreeing the Draft Local Plan, there was a change in legislation affecting the area near the Atomic Weapons Establishment Burghfield. The change means that the Grazeley garden town proposal, and therefore the strategy proposed by the Draft Local Plan, is no longer achievable.

The Revised Growth Strategy retains the key principles and allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan. However, the latter has been updated to reflect a different pattern of development across the borough.

With regard to the pattern of development, the main differences to the Draft Local Plan are:

- The removal of the Grazeley garden town;
- The identification of a new garden village on land south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham, referred to as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley;
- The identification of a significant area of additional housing within the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location; and
- The identification of additional smaller development sites within and adjacent to a number of villages across the borough.

Sites of particular interest to Great Langborough residents may include the following: -

South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SWSDL)

The Revised Growth Strategy proposes the allocation of further land within the extent of the SWSDL major development on land south of Waterloo Road to provide around an additional 835 dwellings and land to the west of St Anne's Drive for 54 dwellings. These would integrate with the planned major development. In addition, it is proposed to extend the extent of the major development to incorporate Gray's Farm which has been bought by the council to establish a sports hub. The land would provide for both outdoor and indoor sports and community uses.

The main differences in the Revised Growth Strategy from the Draft Local Plan (2020) differences are:

- The identification of land south of Waterloo Road for 835 dwellings;
- The identification of Land to the west of St Anne's Drive and south of London Road for 54 dwellings; and
- The identification of Gray's Farm for outdoor and indoor sports and community uses.

Together with the 17 dwellings proposed for Knoll Farm (see below), these sites add 896 dwellings to the total of 2,500 already included in the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location.

Land South Of Gipsy Lane

The Draft Local Plan (2020) proposed an additional area in the SWSDL for housing, providing 17 dwellings in land south of Gipsy Lane. This is retained within the Revised Growth Strategy.

This land is known as Knoll Farm. It contains a single dwelling and various outbuildings. The land lies largely in the flood plain area of the Emm Brook. It currently affords a rural view over the Emm Brook valley towards Lucas Hospital for a significant number of residents in Gipsy Lane. The current plan for the South Wokingham Distributor Road will impact the quality of the view. However, the plan sets out to achieve mitigation by tree planting and other measures.

Knoll Farm is currently accessible only from Gipsy Lane via a pedestrian request level crossing. Network Rail wishes to reduce the number of level crossings between Reading and Waterloo to allow journey time savings. Although unstated in the Revised Growth Strategy, it may be that the plan for 17 new dwellings on as yet undefined higher ground could provide the funds for a new road access from the South Wokingham Distributor Road. This would enable the closing of the level crossing from Gipsy Lane.

Additional sites proposed for allocation within the updated approach, and capacity: -

Land to the rear of Toutley Hall, north west of Old Forest Road, Winnersh	15
Former M&S, 26-36 Peach Street, Wokingham	15
Wokingham Library, Denmark Street, Wokingham	15
Suffolk Lodge, Rectory Road, Wokingham	20
Land at the corner of Wellington Road and Station Road (accessed via Park Road), Wokingham	21
Millars Business Park, Molly Millars Lane, Wokingham	90
Bridge Retail Park, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham	59

The majority of these sites are in or very near Wokingham town centre, adding the load from 235 dwellings to traffic flow in these already busy areas. The change of use of the existing and relatively new Wokingham Library building from a public asset to residential accommodation will be of significant interest. The library function will transfer to the Carnival Pool complex.

How to Get Involved

The public consultation on the Revised Growth Strategy will be open until 17 January 2022. The consultation is available on the council's new engagement website at engage.wokingham.gov.uk. This page also has links to key information about the Local Plan Update, including all of the background documents.

WBC will also be holding drop-in sessions for you to talk to officers and elected councillors about the Revised Growth Strategy and places must be booked in advance on our engagement site.

These will be at:

Wokingham

St Crispin's School, Main hall

London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS Monday, 22 November from 7pm to 9pm (*already held*)

Arborfield

Arborfield Green Leisure Centre Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, RG2 9GB Tuesday, 30 November from 7pm to 9pm

Online Information Sessions:

WBC is holding four online information sessions for those who are unable to attend the in-person events. For more information and to book your place, visit our Right homes, right places: local plan page at:

engage.wokingham.gov.uk

Thursday, 2 December 6 to 7pm

Thursday, 2 December 7.30 to 8.30pm

Monday, 6 December 6 to 7pm

Monday, 6 December 7.30 to 8.30pm

A recording of one of the meetings will be available for viewing on demand.

Comments on the Revised Growth Strategy must be submitted in writing by 5pm on Monday, 17 January 2022.

You can email LPU@wokingham.gov.uk or write to Growth and Delivery Team – Revised Growth Strategy Consultation, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

Copies are available to view on demand. Email us at LPU@wokingham.gov.uk or call **0118 974 6000**.

WBC will review all comments received, look at the key issues raised, and take these into account in working to the next stage of the new Local Plan.