



Hungerford Neighbourhood Development Plan Update 18/2/2021

The purpose of this document is to provide an update for residents on progress with the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan.

Background

Since 2018 a project team of residents and Town Councillors have been working on a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the civil parish of Hungerford. The project covers the period until 2036.

Once completed and approved by a majority of parish voters at an officially constituted referendum, an NDP would become part of the statutory local planning policies used by West Berkshire Council (WBC) to determine the approval or refusal of planning applications in Hungerford. In effect, through the NDP legislation WBC delegates aspects of the Local Plan to the parish.

One of the most important parts of the delegation is the determination of where and what type of housing is provided within the parish area up to 2036. The actual number of new homes required is determined by WBC in the Local Plan. Other parts of a confirmed NDP allow us to set out our priorities for how the town and surrounding area should evolve in the future. With an NDP in place, the town would benefit from receiving a greater share of the levy paid by new developments and have discretion over using that money for our priorities.

Future development in Hungerford

Central government requires WBC to determine how many additional homes will be needed across the district over the Local Plan period and to inform NDP areas like Hungerford of their contributions towards the total. In the Draft Local Plan ([LINK](#)) issued by WBC in December 2020 the number for Hungerford was set as 55 homes - this is the minimum requirement that would need to be identified towards the overall District-wide needs during the 15-year Local Plan period.

In order to understand the available locations for the new homes and commercial premises needed across West Berkshire, over the last 2 years WBC invited people and organisations with land interests to submit their potential sites to the WBC "Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment" (HELAA). WBC then conducted a comprehensive evaluation examining each of the promoted sites and looking at everything from landscape and wildlife impacts to flood risks and highways implications. WBC published the results of this work in February 2020. [WBC LINK](#)

The HELAA assessments conclude whether each site is potentially developable in full or in part during the 15 year plan period. This map ([LINK](#)) shows the HELAA results for sites in Hungerford. **Only those sites concluded as developable within 15 years are being assessed by the Hungerford 2036 team.**



In parallel with the WBC HELAA research, the Hungerford 2036 team created a set of site assessment criteria drawing upon the resident survey in 2018, various consultation events and previous information sources such as the Town Plan. The resulting documented criteria were published in November 2019 ([LINK](#)). The purpose of these criteria is for us to be able to critically examine each of the potentially developable HELAA sites against Hungerford's own priorities.

As at February 2021, the Hungerford 2036 team is working through the assessments of the Hungerford sites with support from a specialist consultant. Once completed, the draft results of this work will be the subject of a local consultation where the project team will invite residents to add their local knowledge to ensure the assessments are as well informed and complete as possible.

Completing the Neighbourhood Plan

In due course all of us, as residents and voters of Hungerford parish, will need to conclude how the Neighbourhood Development Plan will allocate development locations in order to fulfil the new homes required as part of the WBC Local Plan. The draft NDP will need to be judged as “properly created” by an independent planning inspector and then the final step will be a straightforward "Yes/No" referendum on the acceptance of the whole documented NDP. If a majority of the people who vote say "Yes" the NDP will become part of the statutory planning regime used by WBC. If a majority vote "No" the responsibilities delegated to the town will revert back to West Berkshire Council – where they have been in the past.

Almost inevitably, Hungerford residents will have differing and possibly conflicting opinions on how and where the town should change. The Hungerford 2036 team will be striving to define an approach that can achieve a local consensus whilst being compliant with the NDP's statutory obligations. For us to reach such a conclusion will need a town-wide spirit of collaboration and a willingness to settle on a realistic and enforceable middle ground so that the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan can be realised for the whole community.

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For further information www.hungerford2036.info or email clerk@hungerford-tc.gov.uk