



For Immediate Release

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Council starts to look at where new homes should go

Councillors will begin to debate where new homes should go next week, as the first step in drawing up the blueprint for future development in the borough. The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan, that currently covers the period to 2029, is being updated by the borough council to guide planning decisions until at least 2039.

A housing figure of around 900 new homes a year has been set for the borough by the government using a national formula based on population projections and affordability.

Next Thursday (2 September), the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee will hold the first of a series of meetings to give views on where these homes should go, starting with potential developments around Basingstoke, as the most sustainable place for easy access to jobs and services.

Councillors will consider a shortlist of potential sites for new housing in and around Basingstoke following an assessment of land put forward by landowners and developers. All of the sites may not be needed to deliver the borough's housing figure so the committee will discuss their relative merits and whether any other sites should be considered that didn't make the shortlist.

A balanced approach to the allocation of housing sites for the plan is proposed by planners. This would see a mix of larger and smaller sites to respond to local needs, as well as ensuring new homes continue to be delivered so the borough has a five-year land supply and can fend off other speculative planning applications by developers.

The proposed guiding principles for the decisions around where homes should go, which include supporting the council's climate change strategy and a 'brownfield first' approach by looking for regeneration and better use of previously developed sites, will be discussed by the committee. These principles, put forward in the report to the committee, also include supporting growth in rural towns and villages, to help them to thrive and meet local needs, as well as supporting neighbourhood planning where communities take an active role in deciding where development should go.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Planning and Infrastructure Cllr Simon Bound said: "Making decisions about where future development should go is never easy. We need to consider, in a balanced way, how to meet the growing demand for new homes for current and future generations, while protecting and enhancing our wonderful green borough.

"We need to look at the suitability of greenfield sites around Basingstoke and also new settlements for future development. Maximising brownfield development through regeneration and intensification, and maintaining the vitality of our rural communities are guiding principles for the plan which will be discussed at later committee meetings, when the relevant evidence base is finalised, but greenfield allocations will also be needed to ensure the plan delivers the growth we need.

"Hearing councillors' views is crucial at this stage of shortlisting possible sites, I look forward to listening to the debate at the committee to help to develop the right strategy for our borough."

After the potential housing sites in and around Basingstoke have been considered, future meetings of the committee will look at new homes in other towns, villages and rural areas and in Basingstoke town centre.

Proposals for housing sites are currently scheduled to go out to public consultation in the draft Local Plan Update in spring next year, alongside proposals for employment sites and other types of development and measures to protect and enhance the borough's landscape and biodiversity. For more information about the Local Plan Update see <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/about-lpu>

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