

Sources of evidence and information

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Neighbourhood plans need to be supported by evidence, because ultimately the neighbourhood plan will be subject to an examination and others will have the opportunity to question your objectives and policies. The evidence should be proportionate and robust, and should support the choices made and approach taken in your neighbourhood plan. It should be as up to date as possible. The evidence should be used to explain succinctly the intention and rationale for each policy in your neighbourhood plan.
- 1.2. There are two ways of building your evidence base, you can:
 - review existing evidence and information already prepared by others; or
 - identify and develop new evidence.
- 1.3. This document provides a guide to what evidence and information is already available that you can use to support your neighbourhood plan. The list includes key documents, but is not comprehensive list of everything available.
- 1.4. The evidence and information is split into categories:
 - Socio-economic data: socio-economic data can be used to gain an understanding of the social and economic composition of your local area and therefore the local issues that are affecting your area that may be able to be addressed through your neighbourhood plan.
 - Evidence to support the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037: West Berkshire Council is preparing evidence to support the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037, and this evidence can be used to support your neighbourhood plan if it is suitable to do so.
 - Statutory lists and environmental designations: there are statutory designations that highlight what is special in your area and what should be protected or enhanced when planning for development. You should take account of these when preparing your neighbourhood plan.
 - Local Plan allocations and designations: the current Local Plan and the forthcoming West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037 include / will include allocations and designations that you should take account of when preparing your neighbourhood plan.
 - Existing Plans for the area: You may have existing plans or strategies for your local area, such as a Parish Plan or Village Design Statement. The evidence, community views and priorities included in these documents could provide you with a starting point for your neighbourhood plan.

2. Socio-Economic Data

- 2.1. Socio-economic data can be used to gain an understanding of the social and economic composition of your local area and therefore the local issues that are affecting your area that may be able to be addressed through your neighbourhood plan.

Population statistics:

- 2.2. The ONS publish annually mid-year population estimates, and every two years population projections. The data for West Berkshire's district, wards, parishes, and urban settlements can be found on the Council's website at: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/population>.
- 2.3. Population statistics can also be found on the ONS website: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections>.

NOMIS

- 2.4. NOMIS (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>) provides free access to the most detailed and up to date labour market statistics from official sources. It includes information for your ward and local authority area on:
- population,
 - employment (including number of jobs),
 - unemployment (including job seekers allowance counts),
 - qualifications,
 - earnings,
 - benefit claimants, and
 - businesses.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

- 2.5. The JSNA highlights the health needs of the whole community and presents population and health data at electoral ward and district level. The process of producing and updating the JSNA is currently being reviewed across Berkshire and, as part of this process, a new West Berkshire Data Observatory (<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/jsna>) has been developed, where up-to-date data on a range of indicators is available. While this is being undertaken, please contact Council's Public Health and Wellbeing Team if you need any further information: publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk.

English Indices of Deprivation

- 2.6. English Indices of Deprivation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>) are statistics on relative levels of deprivation in England and were updated in September 2019. The Ministry for Communities, Housing and Local Government Department for Communities and Local Government provide the indices for local authorities as a dashboard (<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjojOTdjYzIyNTMtMTcxNi00YmQ2LW11YzgtMTUyYzIxMzQ3NzQ2IiwidCI6ImJmMzQ2ODEwLTljN2QtNDNkZS1hODcyLTI0YTJiZjM5OTVhOCJ9>), where you can explore the data at local authority and neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level. You can also check the relative levels of deprivation between 2015 and 2019 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019-mapping-resources>). Please note that the Indices of Deprivation cannot be used to quantify how deprived or affluent a small area is.

Statistical Digest of Rural England (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)

- 2.7. The Statistical Digest of Rural Statistics (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-digest-of-rural-england>) is a collection of statistics on a range of social and economic subject areas. The statistics are split by rural and urban areas, allowing for comparisons between the different rural and urban area classifications. The Digest includes high level statistics which present an overall picture for England.
- 2.8. Although the Digest only includes high level statistics, it may be helpful in allowing you to compare the national situation with your local situation to show how similar or different your area is.

Rural Living – Statistical Indicators and Rural Economy – Statistical Indicators

- 2.9. A set of publications (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-living-statistical-indicators> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-economy-statistical-indicators>) containing statistics, data and research relating to:
- living in rural areas, including information on demography, provision of services, broadband speeds, and availability of public transport, and
 - the contribution of rural areas to our economy.

West Berkshire Annual Monitoring Report

- 2.10. The AMR includes data to assess the performance of the individual planning policies in the development plan, but also to provide a general portrait of the social, economic and environmental conditions in the district and the wider effects of the development plan on the district: <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/amr>.
- 2.11. However, it is important to bear in mind that each source might have a slightly different definition so you might not be comparing like for like. So the Rural Living datasets might be slightly different from the Census and a direct comparison from one census to another might not be possible for some things as well.

3. Evidence to support the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037

3.1. The Council is in the process of preparing various evidence documents that will support the Local Plan Review (LPR). Most have now been published, however several will be available in Summer 2021 to coincide with the publication of the proposed submission version of the LPR:

Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
Employment				
Employment Land Review	District-wide. The review will consider individual Protected Employment Areas	December 2020	An assessment of future demand for employment floor space, as well as existing and committed future supply. The study also identifies floorspace/land requirements to address unmet need	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=49796&p=0
Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) and Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA)	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	EDNA: February 2016 FEMA: October 2016	Information on Berkshire's economy and the identification of how much land is required for employment growth	
Flooding				
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 and Level 2 (SFRA)	District-wide but consideration of sites promoted for the HELAA. The Level 2 SFRA will assess some specific sites.	Level 1: February 2020 Level 2: December 2020	Will determine the variation in flood risk across the district. The Level 1 assessment looks at the district as a whole, whilst the Level 2 assessment looks at specific sites or areas.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/sfra

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Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
Housing				
Affordable Housing Viability Assessment	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	December 2020	Tests the potential viability of requiring market-lead residential development to provide affordable housing, whilst taking into account the local housing market, current delivery and the cumulative impact of the Local Plan policies	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/evidencebase
Five Year Housing Land Supply	District-wide with consideration of sites by settlement and Parish area	Annual	We are required to identify enough deliverable sites to meet our housing requirement for the next five years. We produce these documents annually and sometimes more frequently if we have planning inquiries which are challenging our housing land supply.	http://www.westberks.gov.uk/amr
Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA)	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	Summer 2021	The assessment will provide the overall pitch/plot requirements for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the district	n/a
Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment	District-wide. Information not available at the Parish level	2016	Assessment of housing needs into the local and wider housing market area. Please note that following the publication of revised national planning policy, the SHMA is now superseded	http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=45375&p=0

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			by the standard method for calculating housing need	
Updated Housing Needs Evidence	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	December 2020	An assessment of affordable housing need and older persons' accommodation within West Berkshire	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=49817&p=0
Infrastructure				
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	Summer 2021	The IDP will set out details of the infrastructure needed to support delivery of the LPR. It is being prepared by the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) team.	n/a
Water Cycle Study	District-wide. Includes consideration of specific sites	Phase 1 Scoping: December 2020 Phase 2 Outline: Summer 2021	Assessment of the relationship between development and the water environment around West Berkshire, by examining the potential impacts of future growth on three main aspects of the water cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water resources • Water quality • Flood risk 	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/evidencebase
Landscape				
Landscape Character Assessment	District-wide. Information also available at a more detailed level.	2019	Tool to assess and identify features and elements that contribute to the character of the landscape. It will inform planning policies and the allocation of land for development.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=47980&p=0

Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
Landscape Sensitivity Assessments	Assessment of specific sites	2009, 2011, 2014 & 2015	Assessment of the sensitivity of the character of the landscape to future development.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lca
Retail and town centres				
Western Berkshire Retail and Commercial Assessment 2016	District-wide. Information not available at the Parish level	2016	Sets out the need for retail and commercial leisure uses in the study area	http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44209&p=0 http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44210&p=0 http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44211&p=0 http://www.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44212&p=0
Settlement hierarchy				
Review of the West Berkshire Settlement Hierarchy	District-wide with information for individual settlements	December 2020	Re-assessment of the existing settlement hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy guides the broad location of new and sustainable development.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/evidencebase
Site selection				
Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)	Consideration of specific sites	December 2020. An updated version will be published in Summer 2021 which takes account of sites that were promoted through the December 2020-February 2021 consultation on the emerging draft Local Plan Review	<p>The HELAA will make a preliminary assessment of the suitability and potential of the sites that have been promoted to the Council by landowners and developers.</p> <p>The HELAA will be a useful starting point if you are considering allocating sites within your neighbourhood plan.</p>	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/helaa

Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
		(Regulation 18 consultation)		
Site Selection Background Paper for the Emerging Draft LPR	District-wide. Parishes where an NDP is being produced that is to include allocations were not covered	December 2020	Sets out the process that was used to identify new allocations in the LPR.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/evidencebase
Thatcham Growth Study	Thatcham	December 2020	A three-stage process that assesses planning for the future of the settlement	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/evidencebase
West Berkshire Density Pattern Book Study	District-wide.	February 2020	Guidance tool used for assessing the capacity of sites promoted for the HELAA.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=48472&p=0
Sport and recreation				
Playing Pitch Strategy	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	November 2019	The strategy will assess the need for playing pitches.	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=49809&p=0
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment				
Interim SA/SEA for the emerging draft Local Plan Review	District-wide. Includes consideration of specific sites	December 2020	Assessment of the economic, environmental, and social effects of the emerging draft LPR	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/evidencebase
Transport				
Phase 1 Transport Assessment Report	District-wide.	December 2020	Outputs from transport modelling using the Council's strategic transport model	https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/29342/Transport-Assessments

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Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
Further transport modelling	District-wide.	Summer 2021	The transport modelling and transport assessment work is an iterative process and further model runs using all three transport models will continue to be undertaken as the preferred development scenario evolves as the LPR process moves forward. This will include work on identifying and scoping the necessary mitigation that will be required to address areas of concern highlighted by the transport modelling outputs shown in this Phase 1 Transport Assessment.	n/a
Other				
Air Quality Study	District-wide. Information will not be available at the Parish level	Summer 2021	The study will consider the potential cumulative impacts on European designations for the protection of qualifying habitats and species, and the potential cumulative impacts on West Berkshire's Air Quality, including Air Quality Management Areas and in places at risk of breaching an air quality objective.	n/a
Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR)	District-wide with consideration of sites by	Annual	Monitors progress of the Local Plan policies and documents	http://www.westberks.gov.uk/amr

Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
	settlement and Parish area			
Planning commitments – non-residential uses	District-wide with consideration of sites by settlement and Parish area	Annual	<p>Provides information about current planning permissions for industrial, commercial and retail development, indicating development progress at the survey date. Only floorspace where there is a net gain/loss of 100 sq.m or more is monitored.</p> <p>Note that we have not produced these documents from 2014 onwards due to resource issues, however we have Excel spreadsheets which contain the raw data that can be provided on request.</p>	http://www.westberks.gov.uk/amr
Planning commitments - housing	District-wide with consideration of sites by settlement and Parish area	Annual	<p>Shows total dwellings completed, outstanding commitments, number of dwellings on sites newly permitted in the previous 12 months and number of dwelling starts. The documents contain summary tables and detailed schedules of progress on sites with permission for housing.</p> <p>Note that we have not produced these documents</p>	http://www.westberks.gov.uk/amr

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Evidence document	Scale of area covered by study	Publication date	Purpose of document	URL
			from 2014 onwards due to resource issues, however we have spreadsheets which contain the raw data that can be provided on request.	

4. Statutory lists and environmental designations

- 4.1. There are statutory lists and designations that highlight what is special in your area, and what should be protected or enhanced when planning for development. You should take account of these designations when preparing your neighbourhood plan. Some are mandatory.
- 4.2. Many of the following designations are all included on the Council's online map (<https://gis1.westberks.gov.uk/applicationtemplates/onlinemap/>), unless specified. The Council are currently developing an online map for the neighbourhood planning groups and when complete it include many of the designations.

Heritage, landscape, and townscape

- Listed Buildings: buildings that are protected by being 'listed' are judged to be of special architectural or historic interest. Further details about Listed Buildings can be found on Historic England's website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/>.
- Scheduled Monuments: historic buildings or sites that are protected for their archaeological importance. Further information can be found on Historic England's website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/scheduled-monuments/>.
- Conservation Areas: areas of special architectural or historic interest. Further details can be found on the Council's website: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/conservationareas>.
- Registered Parks and Gardens: parks and gardens of special historic interest. Further information can be found on Historic England's website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>.
- Registered Battlefields: areas that are important English battlefields. Further information can be found on Historic England's website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-battlefields/>.
- Buildings at Risk: Historic England's Buildings at Risk Register identifies buildings, places of worship, monuments, parks and gardens, conservation areas, battlefields and wreck sites that are listed and have been assessed as being at risk.

Environment

- Special Protection Areas (SPAs): areas that are designated under the European Commission Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (1979). Under this Directive, the UK Government must designate SPAs to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds (listed in the Directive) and regularly occurring migratory birds. It has to protect SPAs from any pollution, disturbance, or deterioration.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): areas which are protected due to their characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features.
- RAMSAR sites: wetland areas of international importance protected under the Ramsar Convention.
- Tree Preservation Orders: an order made by the local planning authority to protect specific trees, groups of trees, or woodland. Further information can be found on the Council's website: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/36674>.

- Flood Zones: identifies the chance of flooding from rivers and/or the sea, based on four flood risk categories that take into account flood defences and their condition. The zones are defined by the Environment Agency.
- Ancient woodland: woodlands that have existed since 1600AD and therefore have unique features such as relatively undisturbed soils, and communities of plants and animals that depend on the stable conditions ancient woodland provides, some of which are rare and vulnerable.
- Local Wildlife Sites: areas of land that are especially important for their wildlife.
- Local Nature Reserves: places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.

Transport

- Public Rights of Way: restricted byways for walking, cycling or horse-riding that meet specified criteria
- Cycle routes: compiled by Sustrans, it identifies designated cycle routes.

5. Local Plan Allocations and Designations

- 5.1. The current Local Plan (<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplan>) includes allocations and designations that you should take account of when preparing your neighbourhood plan. The current Local Plan comprises of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), Housing Site Allocations DPD, and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.
- 5.2. Work on the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037 (<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/localplanreview2037>) is progressing and this will include allocations and designations. It will supersede upon adoption in 2022 the Core Strategy DPD, Housing Site Allocations DPD, and the saved policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006.

Housing

- 5.3. Core Strategy policies CS2 (Newbury Racecourse: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36376&p=0>) and CS3 (Sandleford: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36359&p=0>) include strategic allocations, whilst the Housing Site Allocations DPD includes non-strategic allocations (see: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/hsa>). Sites allocated for residential development have been allocated to ensure that sufficient land is brought forward to meet the identified need for homes in the district.

Employment

- 5.4. The Local Plan does not include any allocated sites for employment. It does however include Protected Employment Area designations. Core Strategy policy CS9 (<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36364&p=0>) seeks to direct proposals for industry, distribution and storage uses to such areas.

Retail

- 5.5. The Local Plan does not include any allocated sites for employment. It does however include Town Centre Commercial Area designations. Core Strategy

policy CS11 (<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36366&p=0>) seeks to protect the vitality and viability of the district's town and district centres.

Sites for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople

- 5.6. The Housing Site Allocations DPD includes two allocations for Gypsies and Travellers as well as an allocation for a Travelling Showpeople site (see: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/hsa>).

6. Existing plans for your area

- 6.1. You may have existing general plans or strategies for your local area, such as Village Design Statements and Parish Plans. The evidence, community views and priorities included in these documents could provide you with a starting point for your neighbourhood plan.
- 6.2. Links to existing plans that have been produced by the community can be found on the following page of the Council's website: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/communityplanning>.