

Local Plan Partial Review Adoption Briefing Note, September 2019

Introduction

The Council has been in the process of partially reviewing the Local Plan since late 2015. The Local Plan Partial Review (LPPR) is subject to an examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Inspector's report finding the policies "sound" subject to his modifications was received on 31 July 2019. These new policies (with the Inspector's modifications and the Council's minor/additional modifications including a new Foreword) have been adopted by the Council on 11 September 2019. These now form part of the Council's development plan and will be used to determine planning applications in the borough.

The new policies cover the following topics –

- Vision and objectives
- Places
- Site allocations
- Infrastructure and planning contributions
- Planning enforcement
- Shops and centres
- Business uses
- Arts and cultural uses
- Hotels
- Rail infrastructure
- Archaeology
- Housing
- Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
- Climate change
- Flooding and drainage
- Waste
- Air quality
- Impact assessments

Key policy changes

The headline changes to key strategic policies particularly on housing, employment uses and flood mitigation are set out below:

- A new lower threshold of 650 sq m residential floorspace triggers the requirement for affordable housing. This will capture small sites characteristic of the borough and increase affordable housing supply. The policy does not discount existing residential floorspace and therefore will also be applicable to any HMO to studio conversions.
- The affordable housing policy seeks maximum reasonable amount from relevant development but development proposing 35% affordable housing will not need to submit a financial viability assessment as long as other policy requirements are also met.
- Affordable housing will be required from extra care schemes.
- A new policy on amalgamation of homes; this restricts the loss of homes unless it is from two homes to one home and the resulting larger home floorspace is no more than 170 sq m. This allows family sized homes, but stems the loss of housing in the borough.
- A new employment policy that supports some housing in Employment Zones where this will help improve the nature and/or quantum of business floorspace. The policy also takes a stronger position on the protection of offices.
- New town centre policies that recognise the challenges faced by High Streets and take a more flexible approach to maintain the vitality of our centres and to support the retail cores.
- A new flood mitigation policy leading to reduced floor risk in the borough with new requirements for mitigation.