

West Berkshire Local Plan – Call for Sites

Information event for Parish & Town
Councils

3 March 2026

Agenda

- ❑ Welcome
- ❑ Why are we starting work on a new Local Plan?
- ❑ What is the Call for Sites and why are we undertaking it?
- ❑ How can Parish and Town Councils support the Call for Sites process?
- ❑ What happens to submitted sites?
- ❑ Other next steps in the preparation of the new Local Plan and Minerals and Waste Local Plan
- ❑ Questions

Housekeeping

- Event will last an hour.
- Please keep mics muted and cameras off during the presentation.
- We will circulate a copy of the slides after the event.
- We will answer questions at the end of the presentation. We encourage you to submit questions during the event using the 'Question and Answer' function at the bottom of the screen. You can upvote questions which you think are important.
- If we do not have time to answer all questions, we will respond to these after the event.

The current Local Plan

- ❑ Local Plan Review (LPR) adopted in June 2025.
- ❑ The LPR sets out the strategy for distributing development within West Berkshire and the policies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- ❑ Common for 10-year gaps between adoption of plans.
- ❑ However, the Government is transitioning to a new plan-making system and recently published details about this:
 - A new local plan system will launch this year which introduces a 30-month process.
 - Process includes three gateway checkpoints to monitor progress and resolve issues early.
 - Government has indicated it may use intervention powers if Councils do not meet the required timelines.

The West Berkshire new Local Plan

- ❑ Although West Berkshire has a recently adopted Local Plan, preparation of a new local plan must officially begin by 31 October 2026. This is due to transitional requirements in national planning policy.
- ❑ Work is now starting on preparing the evidence base needed to support the new Local Plan, alongside preparation of a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

The West Berkshire new Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- ❑ The Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in December 2022.
- ❑ It sets out the planning policies for minerals and waste planning in the district and site allocations
 - Minerals in West Berkshire:
 - ❑ Sharp sand and gravel (1 site allocated)
 - ❑ Soft sand (1 site allocated)
 - Waste management provision - Aim to continue to be net-self sufficient for waste management (across all waste types).

The new Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- ❑ Preparation of a new plan must begin by August 2027
- ❑ Where possible evidence base will be shared with Local Plan
- ❑ Specific minerals and waste evidence will also be required, specifically around identifying the Council's need for mineral resources and waste management capacity.

Why is a Call for Sites being undertaken?

- ❑ The new Local Plan and new Minerals and Waste Local Plan will set out policies to help meet the district's future development needs, including through site allocations.
- ❑ As we progress work on these plans, we will build a clearer picture of the district's future needs, for example housing (including affordable housing), employment land, infrastructure, and other uses too. To do this, we will prepare a range of evidence studies and work closely with stakeholders.
- ❑ To help us understand what land may be available to meet these needs as they are identified, we have launched a Call for Sites.
- ❑ The Call for Sites gives landowners, site promoters, communities, and others with development interests the opportunity to put forward potential sites.
- ❑ It is an important early stage in preparing local plans. It allows local planning authorities, such as West Berkshire, to gather information about land that may be suitable for future development.

What type of sites should be promoted?

- ❑ Sites can be promoted for any use, including but not limited to:
 - Residential (market housing, self and custom build, rural exception)
 - Employment
 - Retail
 - Minerals and waste
- ❑ Can be within or outside of settlement boundaries, however, sites proposing fewer than 10 dwellings within settlement boundaries should not be submitted.

Should sites be promoted in certain locations?

- ❑ Sites from anywhere in the district can be promoted.
- ❑ Our current Local Plan identifies a spatial strategy and requires development to follow the district-wide settlement hierarchy.
- ❑ This spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy will be reviewed as part of work on the new Local Plan.
- ❑ It is also worth noting that one of the aims of the Council's Strategy is to help ensure villages remain vibrant in the long term.
- ❑ However, we recognise there are a significant number of constraints across the district, all of which will be carefully considered when assessing promoted sites.

How should sites be promoted?

- ❑ An online submission form is available at:
<https://westberks.gov.uk/call-for-sites>.
- ❑ The form asks for a range of information, grouped into the following categories:
 - Landowner details
 - Site details, eg. location, existing uses, adjacent uses
 - Proposed use
 - Site constraints, eg. access issues, flood risk.
 - Site availability, eg. when is site likely to be available for development?
 - Site achievability, eg. leasehold interests, legal considerations

Call for Sites submission form

3. Site Details

Please provide information about the site's location

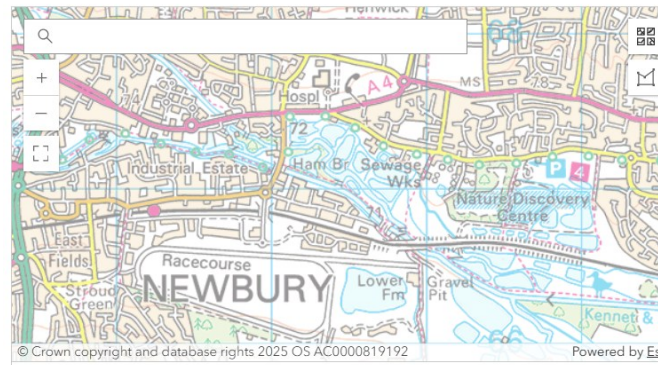
Site Name*

Is the site known by any particular name? Please provide a name describing this site

Please draw the area suitable for development*

Please use the interactive map below to draw the boundary of the site you are submitting. To do this:


1. You may want to use the 'Large Map' widget on the left-hand side of map in order to capture your site boundary more easily
2. Start typing the address in the search box. Alternatively zoom in to the correct location using your mouse or the 'Zoom in' and 'Zoom out' widgets on the left-hand side of the map
3. Select the draw 'Area' widget on the right-hand side of the map
4. Click around the edge of the land you wish to submit to create a polygon. Add a point in each direction and ensure the outline follows the boundary of the site as accurately as possible
5. Close the shape by clicking on your first point.



Call for Sites submission form

4. Proposed Use

Please select the primary proposed use for the site*

Housing 

Housing Options*

Market housing scheme with an element of affordable housing in line with policy requirements

100% Affordable housing

Rural exception site (small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding)

100% Self-build or custom-build housing (housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing)

Specialist residential (e.g. care home, homes for older or disabled people)

Please note....

- Submitting a site:
 - **does not** guarantee it will be allocated for development in the new Local Plan or new Minerals and Waste Local Plan; or
 - **does not** guarantee it will be granted planning permission.

How can Parish and Town Councils support the Call for Sites?

- ❑ Promote local awareness:
 - Widens the reach of the Call for Sites.
 - Increases the likelihood of receiving a diverse mix of submissions, not just from large landowners but smaller landowners, community groups and individuals who may be unaware of the process
- ❑ Parish and Town Councils are familiar with local constraints, aspirations, and community identities. You can help us by identifying local priorities and opportunities:
 - Are you aware of land in your parish that we should consider? If so, please make the landowners aware of the Call for Sites.
 - Do you have any land that you would like to promote?
- ❑ We would be interested to know of any possible sites, particularly for rural exception housing.

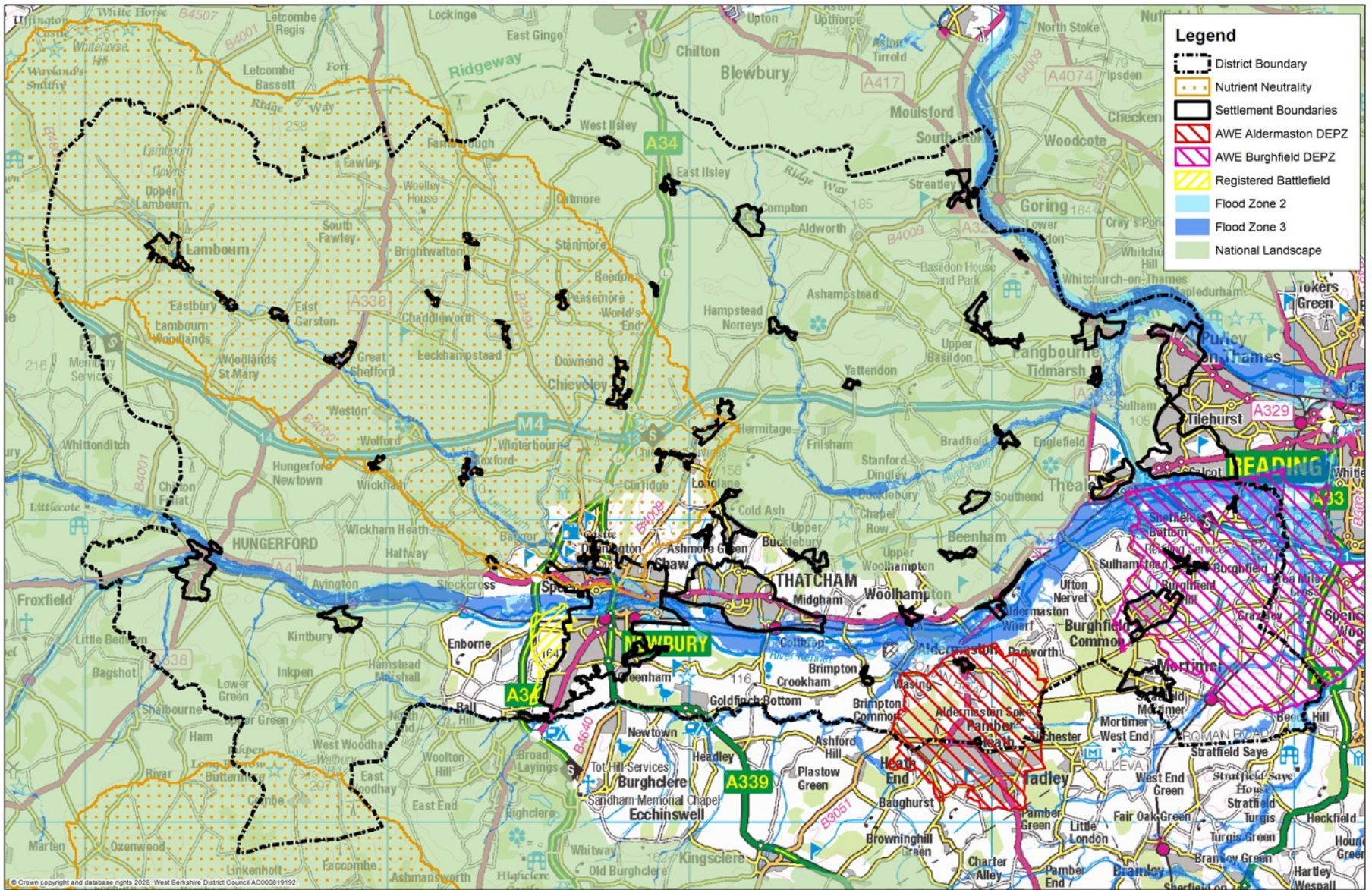
Rural Exception Sites

- ❑ The Call for Sites process presents the opportunity to identify land that could be used for rural exception sites.
- ❑ Defined in national planning policy as:

“Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding”

More about rural exception sites

- ❑ A mechanism for delivering affordable housing on small plots of land in areas adjacent to rural settlements that would not otherwise be granted planning permission for housing development.
- ❑ Their purpose is help address local housing need and sustain rural communities.
- ❑ An exception site is literally an exception in planning terms. It allows for planning permission to be granted on land that would not normally be granted planning permission, for example it is adjacent to a rural settlement and located within a National Landscape.
- ❑ Parishes will need to work with Connecting Communities in Berkshire if the local community is interested in rural exception sites.



How Parish Councils can support rural exception sites in West Berkshire

- ❑ Parish Councils represent the views of their local communities and can play an important role in identifying and highlighting unmet housing needs.
- ❑ They can:
 - Work with Connecting Communities in Berkshire to help identify potential locations for rural exception sites and suitable housing association partners.
 - Support West Berkshire Council by sharing insight into local priorities and helping to identify land that may be suitable for rural exception site development.
 - Communicate the benefits of affordable rural housing to residents, including sustaining local services and enabling families to remain within the parish, helping to ensure rural communities remain sustainable and vibrant.

What happens after the Call for Sites ends?

- ❑ Following the end of the Call for Sites on 30 March 2026, we will assess all the sites promoted through the preparation of a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).



What is the HELAA?

- ❑ A technical study required by national planning policy.
- ❑ It will form part of the evidence bases for the new Local Plan and new Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- ❑ It assesses the availability, suitability and achievability of sites for housing, employment, and other uses.
- ❑ It will provide a starting point for site selection work that will determine what sites should be allocated.
- ❑ It does not allocate sites or influence planning decisions.

Next Steps for the new Local Plan



Next Steps for the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan



Timetable to be prepared



Evidence gathering

Thank you

Any questions?



Contact details

❑ Telephone: 01635 519 111

Planning Policy:

❑ Email: planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk

❑ Website: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/planning-policy>

Minerals and Waste:

❑ Email: mwdpd@westberks.gov.uk

❑ Website: <https://westberks.gov.uk/mwlp>

Connecting Communities in Berkshire

- ❑ Email: admin@ccberks.org.uk
- ❑ Telephone: 0118 988 0178
- ❑ Website: <https://ccberks.org.uk/>

- ❑ Rural Affordable Housing:
<https://ccberks.org.uk/our-projects/rural-affordable-housing/>
 - Maria Kelly, Rural Housing Enabler:
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