

Topic paper: Green and Blue Infrastructure June 2017

To accompany Guildford borough Proposed Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites



Further information and alternative formats

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Contents

1. Purpose of this topic paper

2. Policy context

- National context
- Local context
- Neighbourhood Plans

3. Evidence base

4. Appraisal

- Consultation feedback
- Biodiversity and landscape
- The hierarchy of designated sites
- Blue infrastructure
- Open space

5. Local Plan policy approach

6. Next steps

Topic paper: Green and Blue Infrastructure

1. Purpose of this topic paper

- 1.1 This topic paper is one in a series, which sets out how we have developed the key strategy within the Guildford borough proposed submission Local Plan: strategy and sites document. Each topic paper will look at the relevant national and local guidance that informs the proposed submission Local Plan. Topic papers will explain how the strategy has developed and the information, evidence and feedback that has informed the choices made in formulating the policies.
- 1.2 The intention of the topic papers is to provide background information; they do not contain any policies, proposals or site allocations. All topic papers will be finalised to accompany the submission of the draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination.
- 1.3 The main areas covered by this topic paper are:
 - Green and blue infrastructure, including open space, biodiversity and landscape
 - The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- 1.4 This topic paper explains the development of proposed submission Local Plan: strategy and sites policies ID4 Green and blue infrastructure and P5 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

2. Policy Context

National context

- 2.1 Our policies must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy and legislation. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) sets out the overarching planning policy framework, supported by [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (NPPG).

Legislation

- 2.2 Section 40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 places a “Biodiversity Duty” on local authorities to have regard to conserving biodiversity when setting policy or making decisions, including in the planning system. The Act states that conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a species population or habitat. The National Planning Practice Guidance (Natural Environment, paragraph 7) states that this includes seeking to make a significant contribution to meeting the commitments made by Government in its Biodiversity 2020 strategy by seeking to minimise impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where this is possible.
- 2.3 The UK is a signatory of a number of international agreements and treaties that address biodiversity, notably the Convention on Biological Diversity treaty opened at the Rio earth summit in 1992, and the Bern Convention, a treaty signed by 46 European states and some states in Africa.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework requirements relating to green and blue infrastructure are summarised in the following bullet points.

Open space

- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessment should identify qualitative and quantitative surpluses and deficits.
- Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless
 - an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements
 - the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location
 - the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.
- Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.

Biodiversity and landscape

- Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the natural environment, including moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature.
- The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils
 - Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services
 - Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible... including by establishing coherent ecological networks.
- Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for development affecting protected wildlife, geodiversity or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.
- Local plans should include a strategic approach that plans positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies should:
 - plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries,

- identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation
 - promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations.
 - Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
 - Planning policies should aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity that are prized for their recreational value for this reason.
 - Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment, for example, drawing on River Basin Management Plans. Working with Local Nature Partnerships, this should include an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks.
 - Local Plans should include strategic policies to deliver conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 2.5 Policies ID4 and P5 are strategic policies which operate at a large scale delivering a broad brush approach. Some of the requirements of the NPPF set out above are better addressed through Development Management policies or through detailed local guidance. This is discussed later in this document.
- 2.6 The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) aims for the delivery of “good” status for all ground and surface water by 2027 at the latest. Much of the River Wey flowing through the borough achieves “moderate” status, with some tributaries rated as “poor” and “bad”. The waterways in our borough are both significant public open spaces and important elements of our borough’s biodiversity and landscape and are therefore addressed through policy ID4. This in turn means that policy ID4 must have due regard to the aims of the WFD.
- 2.7 The UK has recently voted to exit the European Union and the government has published the [Great Repeal Bill White Paper](#), which sets out the intention to incorporate all applicable EU law into British law and to preserve EU law already incorporated into British law. Therefore, European directives and other legislation remain important considerations.

Local context

- 2.8 Green and blue infrastructure is an issue of great importance as much of the borough is rural and it has significant environmental assets. The Council has produced the Open Space Sports and Recreation Assessment 2017 to inform our understanding of open space, sports and recreation provision in the borough. This updates and replaces the 2006 [PPG17 Open Space Sport and Recreation Audit](#).
- 2.9 The Surrey Nature Partnership (SyNP), the Local Nature Partnership for Surrey recognised by government, has developed a strategic approach to biodiversity based around Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) across Surrey. BOAs are areas where there are concentrations of recognised sites of biodiversity importance, both statutory and non-statutory. BOAs represent areas where the maintenance, restoration and creation of priority habitats will be most effective in achieving the aim of conserving and enhancing biodiversity at a landscape (strategic) scale, making

wildlife more resilient to a changing climate and other pressures. Each BOA has a number of policy statements (13 of which apply to our borough) that align with the national outcomes set out in Biodiversity 2020. This provides an ecosystem approach to nature conservation which extends across and beyond the county.

- 2.10 An overarching local approach to the environment is set out in the Guildford borough [Corporate Plan 2015-20](#). Under the theme of the environment, our priorities are to enhance biodiversity and reduce pollution, protect and improve the environment and protect green spaces sustainably.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.11 Neighbourhood Planning enables Neighbourhood Forums and Parish Councils to develop a vision and planning policies for their designated neighbourhood area. Those 'Neighbourhood Plans' which are successfully adopted will form part of the statutory development plan for the area that they cover. Where a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted or emerging before an up-to-date Local Plan is in place, the local planning authority should take it into account when preparing the Local Plan policies.
- 2.12 There is currently one adopted Neighbourhood Plan (Burpham) and one emerging Neighbourhood Plan (Effingham) within the borough. Seven other Parish Councils are also currently producing Neighbourhood Plans. Once formally adopted, these documents form part of the development plan and can carry weight in the planning process.
- 2.13 Burpham Neighbourhood Plan includes three policies that deal with open space: policies B-EN1, B-EN2 and B-EN3. These policies protect private green space on residential gardens and existing public open spaces, including by designating a number of Local Green Spaces. It is considered that there is no conflict between the approach outlined in policies ID4 and P5 and the Burpham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.14 The weight given to an emerging plan will depend on, among other things, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the plan (NPPF paragraph 216). Therefore, an emerging neighbourhood plan will pick up weight once evidence of consultation is published and the level of unresolved objection is known. At time of writing, the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan has been through two statutory consultations. The plan is progressing towards examination and is accorded limited weight at this stage.
- 2.15 Details are available at <http://www.guildford.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanninginformation>.

3. Evidence base

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires us to develop policies based on up to date evidence. Our evidence base comprises documents that have helped inform past and current stages of our Local Plan policy development; emerging evidence will help inform future development of policies for the Local Plan.
- 3.2 The key pieces of evidence base relevant to green and blue infrastructure are:
- Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment 2017
 - Assessment of Site for Amenity Value 2017
 - [Biodiversity Opportunity Areas \(SyNP\) December 2015](#)

3.3 Further information and copies of the evidence base documents are available on the Councils website at: <http://www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/evidencebase>.

4. Appraisal

- 4.1 The following section brings together relevant legislation, national policy, guidance and evidence base findings where appropriate and sets out the reasoning for the policy approach taken in the proposed submission Local Plan: strategy and sites.
- 4.1 This section also highlights key consultation feedback on the Draft Guildford borough Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2014 document. It highlights the main areas relevant to formulating a Local Plan policy approach for green and blue infrastructure in our borough and indicates how these have influenced the development of policy.
- 4.2 The draft Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2014 included Policy 19 Green and blue infrastructure. This policy is significantly different from Policy ID4 Green and blue infrastructure, included in the proposed submission Local Plan: strategy and sites. The 2014 policy was drafted prior to the emergence of the strategic approach to biodiversity and landscape produced by SyNP. The draft plan 2014 also differs from the current proposed submission plan in that it did not include an equivalent policy to P5 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

Consultation feedback

- 4.3 The comments received during the consultation in 2014 made the following points:
- Strong support for protection of biodiversity and landscape
 - Strong objection to the language used in the policy for being too aspirational, undetailed and vague
 - Objection to the idea of enhancement of biodiversity and landscape rather than conservation
 - Objection to additional protection for biodiversity (current protection is adequate)
 - Support for new open space in urban areas and protection of existing open space
 - Suggestion to split open space from biodiversity
 - Suggestions for new local green space, open space, wildlife sites, wildlife corridors, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) and sports facilities
 - Objection to the lack of SPA policy and lack of protection for designated sites
 - Objection to the lack of planning across local authority boundaries
 - Objection to the lack of reference to WFD and waterways
 - Objection to SANGs on existing open space, and the principle of SANGs in general
 - Strong objection to development in the countryside and in villages and development in general, on biodiversity and landscape grounds
 - Objection to the lack of focus on flooding and playspace.

A full list of the main issues raised at both Regulation 18 consultation stages is provided in the **Consultation Statement** accompanying the Regulation 19 proposed submission Local Plan Strategy and Sites document.

Biodiversity and landscape

- 4.5 The NPPF and the NERC Act are clear that sustainable development means making net gains for nature and biodiversity, not just preserving and protecting what currently exists. This means that the Local Plan must take a proactive approach that goes beyond protective designations and deliver biodiversity gains through planning policy.
- 4.6 The NPPF adds further detail by requiring the Local Plan to specifically set out a strategic approach to planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure (paragraph 114). Planning policies must also plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries (paragraph 117). This is a clear indication that strategic local plan policies for biodiversity and landscape must consider a context wider than the local area, and must both enhance existing biodiversity and create new biodiversity.
- 4.7 To meet these requirements, policy ID4 incorporates the strategic approach developed by SyNP (see paragraph 2.7). The Council agrees that the SyNP approach is robust and meets the requirements of the NPPF and the NERC act so has not considered developing an alternative approach.
- 4.8 Policy ID4 implements the SyNP approach in two ways:
- It states that the Council will seek opportunities for habitat restoration and creation, particularly within and adjacent to these BOAs. The Council's Parks and Countryside service manages the Council's own estate in ways consistent with the SyNP approach and, as the supporting text in Policy ID4 states, new SANGs promoted through the Local Plan are expected to make a very significant contribution in this regard. The Council will design and manage its SANGs to support the objectives of the BOA they are in or adjacent to where possible.
 - It requires proposals for development to deliver net gains in biodiversity where possible that should support the BOA objectives. This includes proposals for new open space and SANGs provided by private landowners.
- 4.8.1** While SANGs are expected to make a significant contribution to achieving net gains in biodiversity, it must be acknowledged that the primary role of SANGs is to provide space for recreation. The Council's experience in delivering and managing SANGs suggests that, in the majority of cases, these two aims can co-exist, and that providing biodiversity enhancements creates better SANGs by increasing their attractiveness to people that would otherwise visit the SPA. However, it is acknowledged that there may be local circumstances where the two aims are not compatible. Paragraph 4.6.45 of the supporting text for policy ID4 sets out the requirement for appropriate site selection, design and management to ensure both aims can be met. The text acknowledges that the primary role of SANGs is to provide space for recreation so that, in a situation where a balance truly cannot be made, recreation will take priority in order to deliver effective protection for the SPA.
- 4.9 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan that accompanies the Local Plan plans for the delivery of over 240 hectares of new SANGs. Under policy ID4 these will support the SyNP approach. Taken alongside the Council's management of existing sites, and biodiversity improvements on development sites, the contribution to the SyNP strategy, and therefore the national objectives set out in Biodiversity 2020, is expected to be significant.

- 4.10 Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation should be identified and mapped. Policy ID4 identifies and maps the SyNP BOAs within the supporting text.
- 4.11 Designated international, national and local sites are identified on the policies map along with ancient woodland in order to meet the NPPF requirement to identify and map the components of ecological networks. The BOAs comprise an ecosystem approach to conservation and as such mapping these in the supporting text of Policy ID4 also identifies the components of ecological networks.
- 4.12 Consultation comments demonstrated a lack of satisfaction with Policy 19 of the draft Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2014 due to the lack of detail and the overly aspirational nature of the policy. It is agreed that policies should be clear and precise, and that it should be clear to anyone seeking planning permission what they are being asked to achieve or avoid. Therefore, Policy ID4 at paragraph two sets out that development proposals should demonstrate how they will deliver net gains in biodiversity where possible and how those biodiversity measures will support the objectives of a BOA where they fall within or adjacent to one.
- 4.13 In order for this element of the policy to avoid becoming unduly onerous, the definitions beneath the policy state that net gains means improvements to biodiversity through habitat creation and/or enhancement that can be integrated into the design of the site and can include measures on building structures. It further explains that these measures should be proportionate for the development and it is envisaged that this could include simple actions like the provision of nesting boxes on the smallest developments. The Council will produce a green infrastructure SPD that will set out how this requirement can be met and what type of measures will be considered proportionate for different scales of development.
- 4.14 The Council acknowledges that there may be circumstances where it is not possible for biodiversity measures to support the BOA that the development falls within or adjacent to. As a result, the supporting text states that alternative biodiversity measures to be delivered where it can clearly be shown that they are more appropriate for the circumstances. This provides amplification for the requirement in the policy that "...biodiversity measures should support that BOA's objectives" (emphasis added).
- 4.15 The monitoring of net gains in biodiversity is limited to developments of 25 homes or greater to avoid it becoming onerous. It is envisioned that this will be adequate to judge whether the policy is being applied correctly and net gains are being achieved.
- 4.16 The NPPF (para. 115) requires Local Plans to give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Policy P1 Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty sets out an approach to protecting the AONB that is consistent with the NPPF and the current Surrey Hills AONB management plan and takes account of the future AONB boundary review.
- 4.17 Policy ID4 addresses the NPPF requirement to aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity (para. 123) at a strategic scale by protecting designated sites within the countryside, which are generally tranquil places. Places of tranquillity that are significant at a local scale are more appropriately addressed through development management policy or through neighbourhood plans.

The hierarchy of designated sites

- 4.18 The NPPF (paragraph 113) requires local planning authorities to set criteria based policies for judging proposals for development affecting protected wildlife, geodiversity or landscape, and requires international, national and locally designated sites to be in a hierarchy of protection that is commensurate with their status and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks. It is most logical that international sites, which are significant at the international scale, should be at the top of the hierarchy with the most protection and that national and local sites should fall middle and bottom of the hierarchy respectively.
- 4.19 Comments received during the consultation indicate strong support for the protection of designated sites. The borough has a large number of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and Local Nature Reserves, some of which are also significant public spaces and/or important components of the borough's landscape. While national policy requires Local Plans to be positively prepared, the NPPF emphasises the protection of biodiversity and landscape by discussing it at some length and it is considered that protecting biodiversity and landscape should be considered a positive act. Policy ID4 therefore presents a negatively worded policy to emphasise the protection of designated sites, both to meet the NPPF and the weight of opinion presented in the regulation 18 and 19 representations. The protection accorded to designated sites becomes stronger further up the hierarchy as implied by the NPPF, but it is considered that the protection accorded to local sites at the bottom of the hierarchy is still strong and is commensurate with their value.
- 4.20 Policy P5 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) presents a policy that specifically deals with the protection of the SPA. The SPA is an international site in the hierarchy described above, but has a separate policy because there is an established, detailed approach to its protection. This approach needs significant explanation and would not read well if contained within policy ID4. A number of respondents, including Natural England, objected to the lack of a specific SPA policy at the draft Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2014 consultation.
- 4.21 Policy P5 is a strategic policy but contains a large amount of detail. It must be consistent with policy NRM6 of the South East Plan. Under guidance from Natural England, the Council has incorporated as much detail from NRM6 into Policy P5 as is needed in order to make the approach to protecting the SPA clear.

Blue infrastructure

- 4.22 Consultation comments, including from the Environment Agency, received during the draft plan consultation in 2014 indicated disappointment with the lack of focus on blue infrastructure and the aims of the WFD. To address this, Policy ID4 introduces a specific requirement to support the aims of the WFD and refers to guidance developed by the Environment Agency.
- 4.23 Respondents objected to the omission of flooding policy within Policy 19 Green and blue infrastructure in the draft Local Plan strategy and sites 2014. Policy ID4 does not address flooding as this is fully addressed through Policy P4 Flood risk and water source protection zones. However, does acknowledge the important role that green space plays in flood risk management and identifies the management and restoration of flood plains as a priority.

Open space

- 4.24 It is considered that the open space across the borough cumulatively forms an asset of strategic importance that is appropriately addressed through strategic policy. BOAs, which provide the strategic approach to green infrastructure at the landscape scale, do not cover settlements so it is considered that open space forms the counterpart to BOAs for built areas.
- 4.25 The NPPF provides detailed policy for the protection of open space, encompassing “all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity”. Paragraph 74 states: “Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”
- 4.26 It is considered that there is no need to add further detail to NPPF policy regarding the protection of open space through Local Plan strategic policy. Policy ID4 therefore states simply that all open space will be protected in accordance with the NPPF. However, the policy and supporting text sets out which land the Council considers falls under the definition of Open Space provided by the NPPF in order to inform the application of NPPF policy. Sports
- 4.27 Standards for open space provision in relation to new residential developments are not considered a strategic matter and will be addressed through development management policy later. These standards will be informed by the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment 2017.
- 4.28 The Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment 2017 identifies land of public value across the borough. This forms the main body of evidence for considering where NPPF policy on open space should be applied. Open spaces are also identified on the policies map, and are identified through descriptions in policy and supporting text of Policy ID4, as detailed below.
- 4.29 The Guildford Local Plan 2003 includes Policy R5 Protection of Open Space which protects all open space within urban areas, and identified sites of 0.4 hectares or over on the proposals map. This approach to open space in urban areas and the Protected Open Space layer on the Proposals Map has been carried over to the proposed submission Local Plan Strategies and Sites as it is considered that these spaces continue to fulfil the purpose for which they were designated.
- 4.30 Policy ID4 continues the approach in Policy R5 by identifying all open space within urban areas as Open Space under the NPPF definition. Policy R5 is considered to have worked well and contributes significantly to the character of our urban areas. All open spaces within urban areas are considered to have public value because
- they provide relief from the intensity of the urban environment
 - residents of urban areas may not have easy access to the countryside
 - they provide breaks in the built environment that maintain the character of urban settlements.

- 4.31 The generally pleasant character is one of the things that makes our urban areas so attractive, which in turn has implications for residents' wellbeing and the borough's economy. It is therefore a strategic asset that is considered appropriate to protect through strategic policy.
- 4.32 The plan proposes to inset some settlements from the Green Belt. The same circumstances do not apply to these settlements: the built form of these non-urban settlements is not as intense and residents are more likely to have access to the countryside. Therefore, it is not considered appropriate that all open space within the settlements proposed for insetting is protected from development by default. However any planning applications for development on this land will still need to be considered in accordance with other policies.
- 4.33 In view of the above, where settlements have been proposed for insetting from the Green Belt it has been necessary to consider whether any of the inset land should be identified as Open Space for the purposes of policy ID4 because it holds particular public value. The Council has produced the Assessment of Sites for Amenity Value 2017 to identify land of public amenity value within settlements and other sites that are proposed to be inset from the Green Belt.
- 4.34 The Amenity Assessment looks at land within proposed inset boundaries but not land where inset boundaries were drawn specifically to take in allocations on the edges of settlements. Land that was assessed as having public amenity value that would be harmed by development is identified as Open Space on the Policies Map. Other land within inset boundaries that is used for open space, sport and recreation is identified in the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment and therefore will be protected in line with the NPPF, as set out in policy ID4.
- 4.35 The NPPF at paragraph 72 requires "great weight" to be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools to meet the needs of existing and proposed communities. As a result, where schools propose to build on Open Space, additional consideration must be given over and above the considerations set out at paragraph 74. Paragraph 4.6.49a has been included in the supporting text to acknowledge this requirement.
- 4.36 The Council received a number of nominations for Local Green Space (LGS) during both regulation 18 consultations. Policy ID4 does not designate any land as LGS because LGS by its very nature is locally significant and are therefore not a matter for strategic policy. A further consideration is the relationship between strategic local plan policies and neighbourhood plans.
- 4.37 The Council supports neighbourhood planning and is currently engaging with a number of existing and prospective neighbourhood planning bodies in order to help deliver neighbourhood plans. Neighbourhood plans are tested through examination and one of the tests is that they are in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan. Policy ID4 is a strategic policy, so including policy on LGS would limit the scope for neighbourhood plan LGS policies. This is an important consideration because LGS is a significant protective designation available to neighbourhood plans. Therefore, the Council considers that LGS should be designated through either Development Management policy or through neighbourhood plans.

5. Local Plan Policy Approach

- 5.1 The proposed submission Local Plan: strategy and sites document proposes the strategic green and blue infrastructure policies for the new Local Plan. It will be followed later by the Local Plan Development Management document that deals with detailed policies and the Council intends to deliver a Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will provide detailed guidance on both policy ID4 and later Development Management policies. Policy P5 should be read alongside the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy (the strategy), which provides detail on the approach outlined in the policy. The strategy will be updated in due course.
- 5.2 Strategic policies are those that address the big picture rather than dealing with detailed matters. They may cover things like the spatial pattern of development, protection of valued assets of borough wide significance and issues that affect the whole borough or beyond. The NPPG provides further guidance stating that strategic policies may have the following characteristics:
- they set out an overarching direction or objective
 - they seek to shape the broad characteristics of development
 - they set a framework for decisions on how competing priorities should be balanced
 - they set a standard or other requirement that is essential to achieving the wider vision and aspirations in the Local Plan
 - they are identified as being strategic in the Local Plan
- 5.3 The content of policies ID4, P1 and P5 is informed by this guidance and the policies do not deal with matters that do are deemed non-strategic. The approach set out in these policies takes a strategic approach to protecting and enhancing green and blue infrastructure as required by the NPPF.
- 5.4 As detailed in the appraisal, Policies ID4, P1 and P5 respond to the requirements of the NPPF where they relate to strategic matters, the results of past consultations, guidance from statutory bodies and evidence base findings.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 The Proposed Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites (June 2017) – referred to as the Draft Local Plan 2017 for shorthand in this topic paper – will be subject to public consultation for 6 weeks from 9 June to 24 July 2017. This public consultation will be focused solely on the proposed changes made to the Draft Local Plan 2016; these changes are identified as such in the Draft Local Plan 2017. This is described as a targeted consultation.
- 6.2 Following this, all comments and representations relating to changes made to the 2016 Draft Local Plan during the consultation period will be considered. Consideration will then be given to any amendments deemed to be necessary to the plan and a decision taken on whether to consult further or to formally submit the plan to the Secretary of State.
- 6.3 For more information please visit: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan.