



**Guildford Draft Local Plan:
Strategy and Sites Consultation 2014
Statement of Community Engagement**

Prepared for Guildford Borough Council
by URS, October 2014



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Introduction

Between July and September 2014, Guildford Borough Council consulted on the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites document. The guiding purpose of this consultation was to reach as many people as possible, to inform them about the consultation and encourage them to ask questions, seek information and submit their comments in response to the Draft Local Plan proposals.

In order to achieve this aim and to fulfil our statutory requirements set out in Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, we undertook an extensive consultation programme and this report sets out how we did this.

What's the purpose of this document?

We're presenting the findings of the Draft Local Plan consultation in two stages.

The first stage (this document) looks at "how did we consult?" It focuses on the steps we took to interact with the Guildford community and our stakeholders over the course of the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2014 consultation, including:

- how we undertook the consultation
- where and when events were held
- how many people participated in the consultation and
- next steps in the development of the Local Plan.

The second stage of the consultation reporting will be based on "what people said". We will produce a document which analyses the main issues raised. It is at this second stage where all formal submissions received during the consultation will be analysed and reported on.

How's this document structured?

The document is divided into five sections and we've colour coded each one to make it easy to navigate:

Background

Overview of consultation

Measuring success

Next steps

Appendices

Throughout the document we have added signposts. These guide you to more information.

Who is URS?

Guildford Borough Council commissioned URS to assist and support their extensive consultation programme. URS were appointed to help deliver events across the borough. URS provided their planning policy expertise to support council officers in engaging with interested parties including key stakeholders, the general community and harder to reach groups. This report is a reflection of the URS and Guildford Borough Council partnership and the work completed during the consultation period.

URS is a leading provider of technical services for public and private sector companies worldwide. URS offers a full range of project services including: working with local authorities developing evidence bases for local plans; being the UK's leading provider of Sustainability Appraisals for local plans; and working with the Planning Advisory Service to provide support to local authorities on issues such as plan viability.

Our specialist stakeholder engagement team has extensive experience of supporting the successful delivery of a wide range of environment and infrastructure projects across the UK.



Background

What's a Local Plan?

A local plan sets out proposed strategies for homes, jobs, transport, infrastructure, services and the environment. The proposals set out in the document are relevant to both our urban and rural communities and can affect the areas where people live, work, shop, play and how they get around.

Why does Guildford need a local plan?

An increasing number of people live and work in Guildford borough and pressure is growing on local housing, services and infrastructure. The local plan is our strategic response to help meet local needs and the government's growth agenda – it will set out the vision for the borough and the approach to development between now and 2031.

What happens if we don't have a local plan?

It is very important that new homes and places of employment are built in areas where the infrastructure is sufficient to support them, or in areas where enough new infrastructure can be provided. Guildford is a successful and attractive area to live and also appealing for business and education. We want this to continue, but in order for this to happen, we need to ensure that the right strategy is in place and the Local Plan will help us achieve this.

Without a local plan, we risk applications and appeals for piecemeal development which may not be accompanied by supporting infrastructure and which may not be of benefit to our borough now and in the future. Therefore, we need to prepare a new local plan so that we can actively manage development across the borough which reflects up to date needs for jobs, homes and infrastructure.



What other local plan consultations have happened in Guildford?

For eight weeks in October and November 2013 we consulted on our Strategy and Sites Issues and Options document. During the process over 5,250 local residents, businesses, organisations and developers responded to us, amounting to around 20,000 comments.

Feedback gathered during the consultation on the Issues and Options was analysed by the Council and fed into the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2014.

You can read a full Issues and Options Community Engagement Statement at: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan

What makes Guildford great?

- 1200 listed buildings
- World class businesses
- 89% Green Belt
- River Wey
- Tourism

What are the key issues for the borough?

- Sustainability: energy, waste and water
- Public transport and congestion
- Green Belt
- Affordable homes
- Flooding

What does the Draft Local Plan look at?

- Economy
- Infrastructure
- Sustainability
- Society
- Development

...So, what proposals are we currently considering?

- Support various modes of transport
 - Expand and improve sustainable modes of transport
- Provide up to 14,800 new jobs
- Offer a choice of housing
 - Provide 73 traveller pitches and 8 travelling showpeople plots
 - 40% of new homes to be affordable
 - 652 new homes a year
- Reduce waste and increase recycling
- Promote renewable and low carbon energy



Overview of the consultation

What was our vision for the consultation on the Draft Local Plan 2014?

Our vision was to create a two-way process of sharing information about the Draft Local Plan and listening to your views.

We wanted to ensure that we reached as many people as possible. The consultation was therefore designed to:

- be timely, meaningful and inclusive
- promote and raise awareness of the consultation period and the opportunities to have your say
- achieve a greater level of response from a wider proportion of stakeholders
- undertake targeted engagement with seldom-heard groups and young people and
- involve the local community and listen to their comments.

We achieved our vision by going beyond the statutory requirements for a local plan consultation. We made every effort to make officers available to answer questions and discuss your concerns, with the ultimate aim of providing you with information on the Draft Local Plan so you could respond to the consultation.

Why did we choose this consultation approach?

We wanted everyone with an interest in the Draft Local Plan to take part in the consultation. We also wanted our approach to align with both our statutory requirements and what we have committed to as a Council in terms of public consultation including:

- Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 -Regulation 18
- Guildford Community Engagement Strategy (2011)
- Guildford Community Involvement in Planning Guidance (2013)

Read the Guildford
Borough Council
Community Involvement in
Planning Guidance at:
[http://www.guildford.gov.uk/
ces](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/ces)

Read the Guildford
Community Engagement
Strategy at:
[http://www.guildford.gov.uk/
ces](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/ces)

Regulation 18 of the
Town and Country
Planning (Local Planning)
(England) Regulations
2012 can be read at:
[http://www.legislation.gov.
uk/ukxi/2012/767/pdfs/
ukxi_20120767_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/pdfs/ukxi_20120767_en.pdf)



Who did we consult?

The Local Plan is an important document and once adopted will affect many people in the Guildford borough. That's why we wanted the feedback we received to reflect the views of the widest possible cross-section of the community and stakeholders.

Whilst we have a legal obligation to talk to statutory consultation bodies we also wanted to hear from the wider population, seldom heard and young people.

Wider population

We wanted to hear from people who the Local Plan would impact - people living, working, studying or visiting Guildford borough.

To do this we made an effort to not just engage with active participants in the community, such as resident associations and parish councils, but also seek out people who may not be as well informed about the implications of the Local Plan.

We aimed to make the consultation relevant and accessible to all people who call Guildford home or who are frequent visitors.

Pop-up events at high footfall areas such as railway stations, shopping centres, festivals, leisure centres and farmers markets were a great way for us to reach people who otherwise may not have been aware or taken the opportunity to get involved.

Getting in touch with the wider population was central to this consultation and many people who spoke to us said they found out things they had not been previously aware of, including the details of the Draft Local Plan.

Seldom heard

It's not always easy to take part in a consultation. Across the UK there are people that are consistently underrepresented in the local plan process.

These people are referred to as seldom heard. For this reason we felt it was important to have a clear focus on engaging and increasing efforts to target particular community groups and sectors including seldom heard.

We tailored the way we engaged seldom heard people through small meetings and outreach events. The target groups included:

- older people
- disability and access groups
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people
- public sector workers
- businesses
- gypsy and traveller community; and travelling show people
- new migrants and people whose first language is not English
- people living in social housing
- faith groups
- homeless and vulnerable adults.

Young people

Young people are often under-represented during local plan consultations. We made efforts to encourage young people aged 16-18 to provide their feedback.

We helped them look into the future and imagine what they wanted their local environment to be like.

Their feedback is important because the Local Plan, once adopted, will affect where they grow up and the options they have for housing, employment, recreation, culture and education.

We went to the University of Surrey Student Union meeting, Guildford College, a Guildford Youth Council meeting and the YMCA to speak to students and vulnerable young people. Students from George Abbot School; Guildford County School; Kings College Guildford, St Peter's Catholic Comprehensive School and Christ College Guildford took part in the online youth questionnaire.

The young people we spoke to and heard from had great views about Guildford and they had fun being involved. We held a relaxed consultation workshop with vulnerable young people at the YMCA and one of the Café Youth Workers at the YMCA Downlink Group gave us excellent feedback:

"Thanks so much for providing a stimulating and exciting evening for the young people; it was fantastic to see them engage in citizenship in such a positive and direct way."



Consultation bodies

There's an extensive list of organisations that we must consult with as part of developing the Local Plan and we call these 'specific consultation bodies' and 'general consultation bodies'. These include bodies such as infrastructure providers and government departments.

Under the Localism Act 2011 and Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and prescribed bodies are required to engage actively and constructively on an ongoing basis on strategic cross boundary matters including the preparation of local plans and other plan documents. This is known as the Duty to Cooperate.

Duty to Cooperate places a legal duty on local authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with 'specific consultation bodies' for strategic cross boundary matters.

The consultation bodies play an important part in shaping Guildford and the workshops we held allowed us to discuss the Draft Local Plan with them in detail. We gained valuable information from the different attendees including local considerations for transport, health, education, utilities and the environment.

The relationships that were built before and during the Draft Local Plan consultation will remain central to our Local Plan as it progresses.

Specific consultation bodies include strategic national bodies like heritage and environment agencies, councillors and neighbouring councils, and service suppliers such as transport, education, health, gas, electricity and water companies.

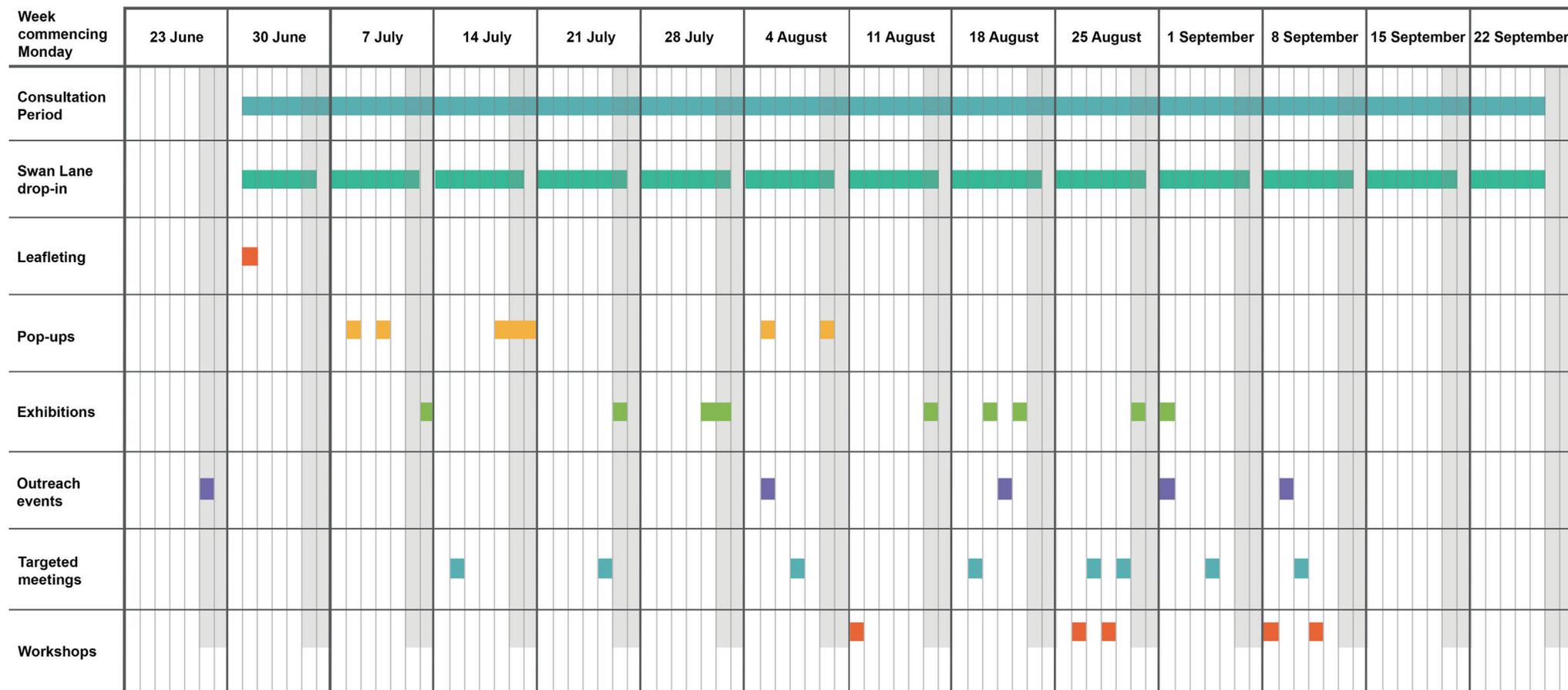
General consultation bodies include voluntary bodies, bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups, bodies which represent the interests of religious groups, disabled people and businesses.

If you're not already receiving notifications and would like to be included in our consultation database, contact the Planning Policy team on 01483 444471 or email planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk

A list of all consultation bodies can be found in Appendix A of the Community Involvement in Planning:
www.guildford.gov.uk/ces



Calendar of consultation events



The Council’s Community Involvement in Planning Document (2013) sets out how the Council will consult on planning matters including the Local Plan. In line with government guidance we committed to consult for at least six weeks; however given that the consultation period was during the summer we wanted to go beyond our minimum requirements and developed the strategy to achieve this.

The consultation on the Draft Local Plan ran for 12 weeks from 1 July to 26 September 2014. We felt that the summer provided us with much more opportunity to get out into the community and be part of seasonal events such as Guilfest. The finer weather is also more appealing for people and we wanted to take advantage of the better conditions which often encourages improved engagement.

Whilst we knew that our chosen consultation period would overlap with summer holidays and school breaks, we extended the consultation period to include July and September. The purpose of this was to enable access to schools, students and organisations, which do not operate during August. We’ve included a calendar above to show you what took place and when. For a more detailed list of events held, see Table 1 on page 12.



How did we consult you on the Draft Local Plan?

We wanted to create a two-way process of sharing information about the Draft Local Plan with you and listening to your views. We also want to make sure we were available to answer your questions and provide people with the information they needed to submit written responses.

To achieve this, we developed an extensive consultation schedule which included an active publicity and media campaign, an array of events across the borough and focussed stakeholder workshops. We also provided full time access to officers, six days a week throughout the consultation in Guildford town centre.

We developed a brand for the Draft Local Plan which would help people identify the document and produced a variety of materials to support the consultation, such as questionnaires and summary documents. The rest of this section further details all the steps we took to get people involved.

We've included copies and descriptions of all publicity materials at the back of this document in Appendix D: Publicity campaign.

Promotion activities

We carried out an extensive promotional campaign to reach as many local people as possible.

We made all consultation materials easy to recognise, with the distinctive, colourful bubble branding created during the Issues and Options phase. The Draft Local Plan branding set it apart from other Council activities and made it easier for people to identify.

As well as using emails to those on our consultation database, local newspaper adverts, posters and the website to promote the consultation we wanted to ensure that activities on the Draft Local Plan and the consultation stood out, utilising a variety of methods to do this, including:

- 'About Guildford' delivered to every household in the borough
- local radio, including 96.4 Eagle Radio
- mass mail-out of leaflets to all households via Royal Mail
- public display boards at Guildford Railway Station and in Council Offices
- Guildford High Street banner
- displays on refuse trucks, taxis and buses
- adverts on the Council website
- media briefings and interviews
- promotion via social media (Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest)
- posters in community areas (post offices, libraries, GP surgeries and Child Care Centres).





Consultation events

We took every opportunity to engage people and make them aware about how they could submit their comments on the Draft Local Plan. Throughout the consultation we applied a flexible approach to make sure that as many people as possible could get involved. This included holding events at different times of the day, over weekend and bank holidays and in lots of different locations.

The boxes below provide more information about the six different types of consultation events that were held across the borough and Table 1 overleaf shows when events were held, where and for who.

1. Leafleting

Postcards were distributed at six train stations across the borough on 1 July 2014, the first day of the consultation. With many people travelling through the railway stations during the morning (7am to 10am) and evening (4pm to 7pm), it was a great place to raise awareness of the consultation. You can see an example of the postcard and the stations we visited on page 22.

2. Pop-ups

We held five public pop-up events at several locations in the borough, including two supermarkets, Guildford Spectrum Leisure Centre, Ripley Farmers' Market and Guilfest in Stoke Park. These information displays were located in venues or at events with potential high footfall so that we could reach as many people as possible. You can read more about the pop-ups on page 23.

3. Exhibitions

We held nine public exhibition events at several locations in the borough. They were a great way for people to have a direct conversation with our planning officers who guided attendees through the exhibition boards, maps and documents. You can read more about the exhibitions on page 26.

4. Outreach events

We held five outreach events at various locations. The aim was to engage a range of people at venues including the Royal Surrey County Hospital, a housing associate community day, 25 Swan Lane and Guildford College. We specifically targeted these venues because the people who visit them are often underrepresented in the local plan making process. You can read more about the outreach events on page 31.

5. Targeted meetings

We held eight targeted meetings with representatives from different seldom heard groups including university students; young people, homeless and vulnerable adults, older people and people with disabilities; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people; vulnerable young people; faith groups and teachers. We specifically targeted these groups as they are often underrepresented. You can read more about the meetings on page 34.

6. Workshops

We held five workshops for different stakeholder groups: parish councillors, stakeholder organisations, resident's associations, local businesses and borough and county councillors. These facilitated group discussions helped participants provide feedback around key policies and sites. You can read more about the workshops on page 39.



Table 1: List of event date, type, venue, target audience.

No.	Date	Time	Type	Venue details	Target audience
1	28 June 2014	10am - 2pm	Outreach event	Councillor Drop-in, 25 Swan Lane, Guildford	Parish Councillors
2	1 July 2014	7am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm	Leafleting	Ash station (peak morning and evening commuting times)	General public
3	1 July 2014	7am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm	Leafleting	Ash Vale station (peak morning and evening commuting times)	General public
4	1 July 2014	7am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm	Leafleting	Effingham Junction station (peak morning and evening commuting times)	General public
5	1 July 2014	7am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm	Leafleting	Horsley station (peak morning and evening commuting times)	General public
6	1 July 2014	7am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm	Leafleting	Gomshall station (peak morning and evening commuting times)	General public
7	1 July 2014	7am - 10am and 4pm - 7pm	Leafleting	Guildford station (peak morning and evening commuting times)	General public
8	8 July 2014	4am - 8pm	Pop-up	Guildford Spectrum Leisure Centre	General public
9	10 July 2014	4am - 8pm	Pop-up	Tesco, Ashenden Road	General public
10	13 July 2014	11am - 3pm	Public exhibition	Guildhall, Guildford Town Centre	General public
11	15 July 2014	4.30am - 6pm	Meeting	YMCA, Bridge Street, Guildford	Youth forum
12	18 - 20 July 2014	11am - 3pm	Pop-up	Gullfest, Stoke Park	General public
13	25 July 2014	2.30am - 4pm	Meeting	Student Consultation, University of Surrey	University students
14	26 July 2014	11am - 3pm	Public exhibition	Lancaster Hall, Send	General public
15	1 August 2014	4am - 8pm	Public exhibition	Sutherland Memorial Hall, Burpham	General public
16	2 August 2014	11am - 3pm	Public exhibition	King George V Hall, Effingham	General public
17	5 August 2014	10.30am - 12.30pm	Outreach event	Seldom-heard groups, Radisson Blu Edwardian, Guildford	Mixed seldom - heard groups
18	5 August 2014	4pm - 8pm	Pop-up	Sainsbury's, Burpham	General public
19	7 August 2014	2pm - 4pm	Meeting	Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House	Homeless and vulnerable adults
20	9 August 2014	9am - 1pm	Pop-up	Ripley Farmers' Market, Ripley	General public
21	11 August 2014	1pm - 5pm	Workshop	G Live, Guildford	Parish Councillors
22	16 August 2014	11am - 3pm	Public exhibition	Upper Village Hall, Shalford	General public
23	19 August 2014	2pm - 4pm	Meeting	Guildford Library, North Street	Older people, disability and access groups
24	20 August 2014	4pm - 8pm	Public exhibition	St Mark's Hall, Normandy	General public
25	21 August 2014	2pm - 7pm	Outreach event	Thames Valley Housing Association, Greyhound Close, Ash	Social housing residents
26	21 August 2014	2pm - 7pm	Outreach event	Thames Valley Housing Association, Winter Close, Ash Vale	Social housing residents
27	22 August 2014	4pm - 8pm	Public exhibition	Fairlands Community Hall, Fairlands	General public
28	26 August 2014	3pm - 5pm	Workshop	G Live, Guildford	Technical stakeholders
29	27 August 2014	2pm - 4pm	Meeting	Guildford Library, North Street	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
30	28 August 2014	6pm - 8pm	Workshop	G Live, Guildford	Residents associations
31	29 August 2014	7pm - 8pm	Meeting	YMCA, Bridge Street, Guildford	Vulnerable young people
32	30 August 2014	11am - 3pm	Public exhibition	The Ash Centre, Ash	General public
33	1 September 2014	11.30am - 1.30pm	Outreach event	Royal Surrey County Hospital	Public sector workers
34	1 September 2014	4pm - 8pm	Public exhibition	Horsley and Send Cricket Club, West Horsley	General public
35	4 September 2014	2pm - 4pm	Meeting	Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House	Faith groups
36	8 September 2014	5pm - 6pm	Workshop	G Live, Guildford	Businesses
37	9 September 2014	11am - 1.30pm	Outreach event	Guildford College	College students
38	10 September 2014	12 noon	Meeting	Teacher Forum Conference, Farnham	Teachers and students
39	11 September 2014	7pm - 9pm	Workshop	Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House	Borough and county councillors

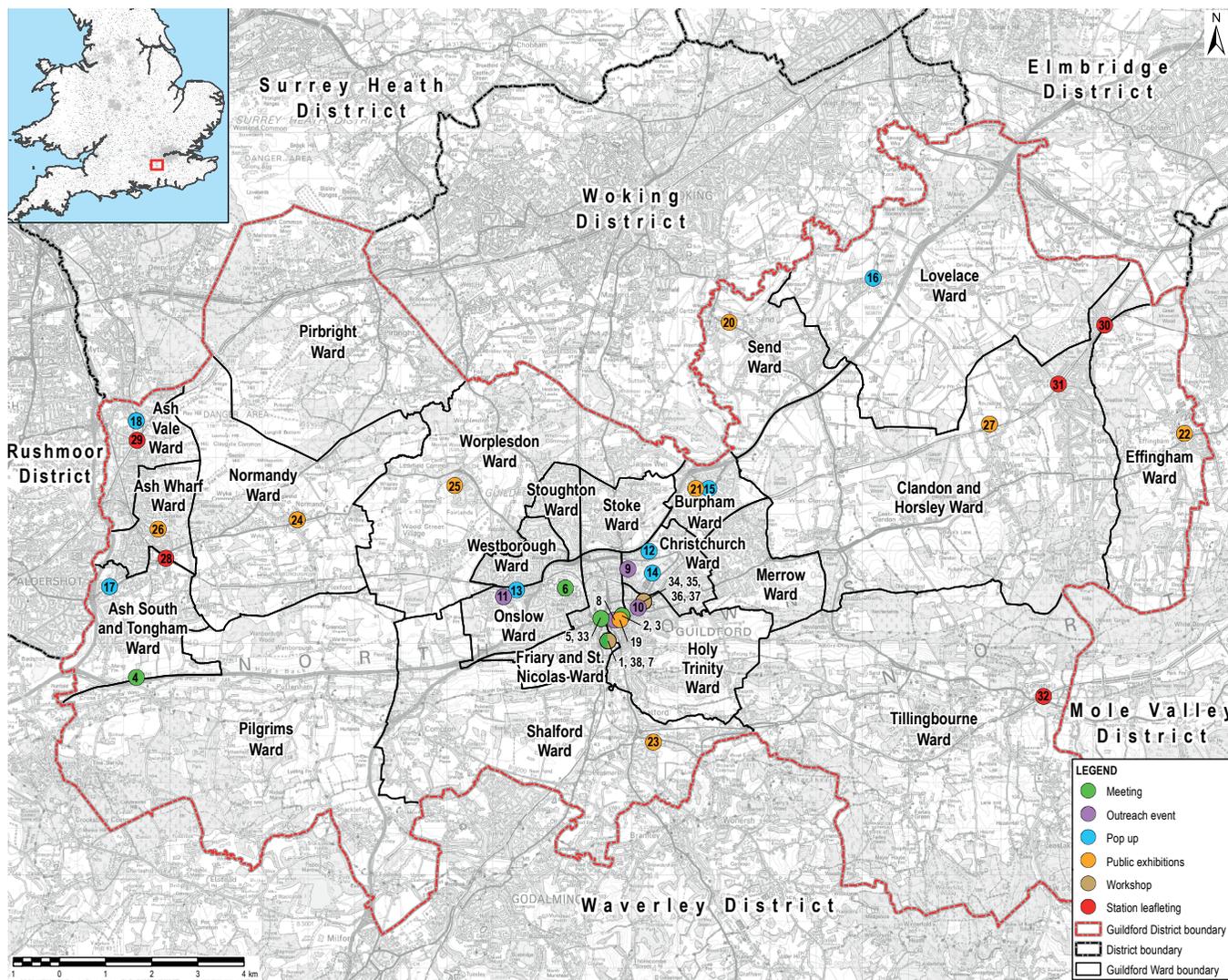


Figure 1: Guildford Draft Local Plan consultation event locations

Where were events held?

Making sure that people across the borough had the opportunity to get involved in the consultation was very important to us, so we spread events across the area.

Another important consideration was holding events close to those communities which could be most affected by the proposals set out in the Draft Local Plan. It was essential that people either had direct access to an event, or one which was a commutable distance from them.

A total of 39 engagement events were held across Guildford borough and Figure 1 shows all the venue locations.

As shown on Figure 1, the events were fairly evenly distributed east to west across the borough, with a high concentration in Guildford which was more accessible for events such as the workshops.

You can read about all the event details at the back of this document in Appendix A: Event overviews.



How many people came to events?

It was great to see so many people come to our events.

Over 1,043 people attended the consultation events and over 1,600 people visited the consultation hub at 25 Swan Lane. Table 2 below shows how many people came to each type of event and the consultation hub.

Event	Recorded attendees
1. Consultation hub - 25 Swan Lane	1,600+
2. Pop-ups	324
3. Public exhibition	441
4. Outreach events	153
5. Targeted meetings	47
6. Workshops	78
Total attendees	2,643

Table 2: Guildford Draft Local Plan event attendance numbers

People also had the opportunity to engage with the Council online through Facebook and Twitter. There were 27,021 page-views on the Local Plan website www.guildfordlocalplan.info and 12,752 page views on the Council webpage www.guildford.gov.uk/draftlocalplan from 1 July to 26 September.

Where did people come from?

To help us understand which areas of the borough had been involved in the consultation, we asked people who came to our events to let us know where they lived by placing a sticky dot on a map.

Figure 2 shows the breadth of reach across the borough as well as the interest from people who live outside the area. It is interesting to see that the places potentially affected by the proposals, if they were to continue forward into the adopted plan, are well represented.

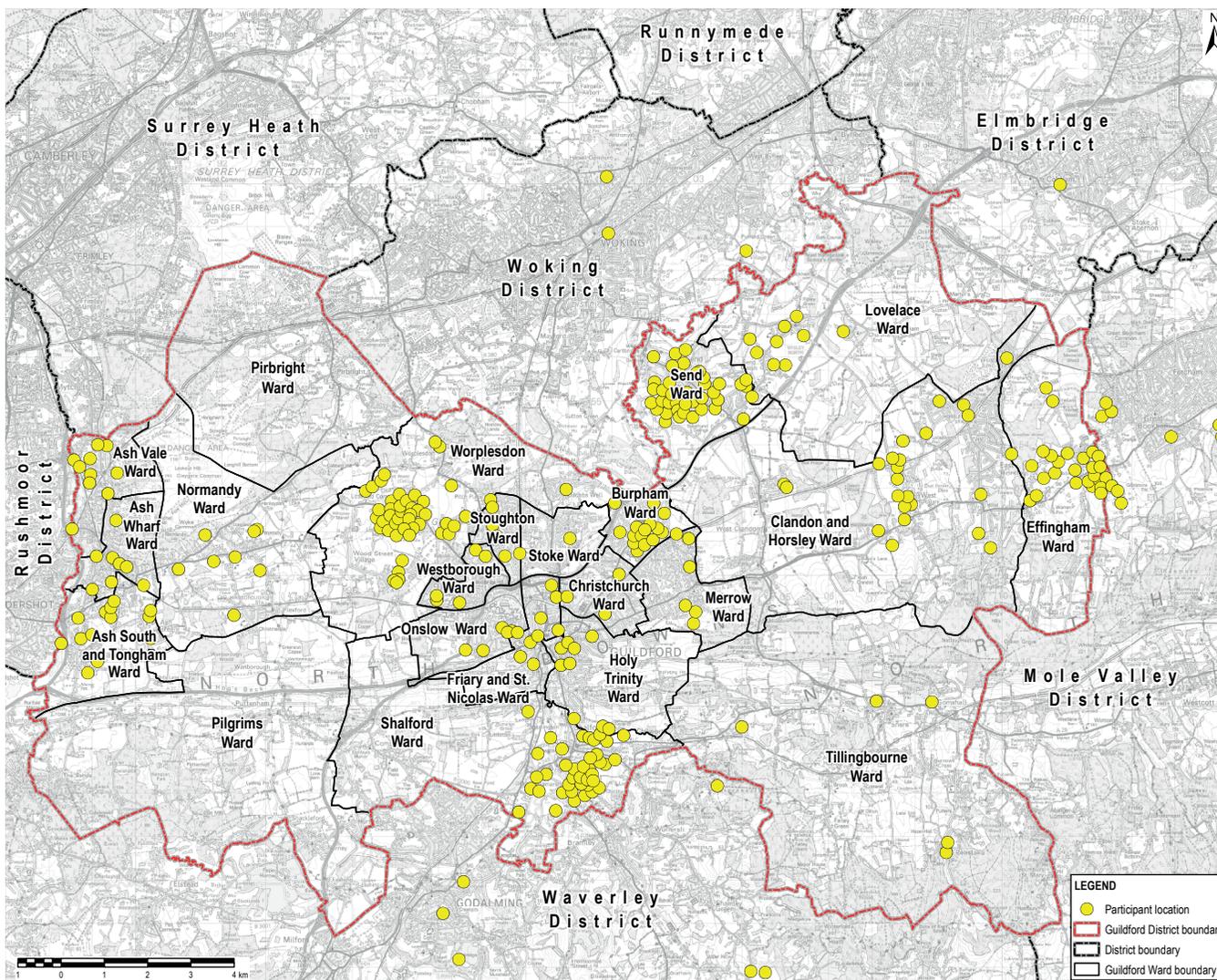


Figure 2: Guildford Draft Local Plan: Where do you live map



It's important that local plan consultation comments are provided in writing. To make the comment valid we also needed to collect a contact name and address which could be an email or home address.

Providing feedback

When we consulted on the Issues and Options draft of the Local Plan in autumn 2013, we sought your views on a series of key issues for the borough and the options that could help us address them. Building on the feedback you gave us in 2013 we developed the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites document, developing a spatial strategy and identifying key sites and policies. This time we were keen to hear your views about:

- the sites identified as suitable for development
- the boundaries of the sites
- the wording of policies
- whether anything has been missed from the Draft Local Plan.

We based our questionnaires around these themes and used these areas to guide our discussion with you about the Draft Local Plan.

We developed a number of different ways for people to tell us their views on the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites document including an online consultation system, questionnaires, email and post, comment slips at events and a consultation hub. Table 3 includes more details about each feedback option.

Online consultation system	<p>Comments could be made online via the Councils consultation system 'Inovem' which makes submitting comments easy and accessible allowing people to consider what they wanted to say and in their own time.</p> <p>The online system also allowed people to save their response and add or review it at a later stage. By adding their details people also had the option of registering for notifications on other consultations.</p>
Questionnaires (hard copy and electronic)	<p>Hard copies of questionnaires were available at all events and from the Council offices to help people structure their responses to the consultation.</p> <p>We also designed a youth questionnaire which we distributed to schools, Guildford College, university students and vulnerable young people.</p>
Email and post	<p>We set up a project postal address and email so people could send their written responses to us.</p>
Comment slips at events	<p>We designed simple comment slips to capture feedback at the public events. They were unstructured so people could provide any feedback they wanted in writing.</p>
Consultation hub - 25, Swan Lane	<p>Council officers were available at 25 Swan Lane to answer questions and discuss the Local Plan. Officers were available 10am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday, for 12 weeks of the consultation.</p> <p>Hard copies of the evidence base, maps and the Draft Local Plan, could be viewed at the consultation hub. The venue also provided the opportunity for people to fill out the questionnaires, and submit their responses.</p>

You can access the portal here:
<http://getinvolved.guildford.gov.uk>

A copy of the questionnaire is included at the back of the document in Appendix C: Consultation materials.

A copy of the youth questionnaire is included at the back of the document in Appendix C: Consultation materials.

Table 3: Guildford Draft Local Plan feedback options



How many people submitted responses?

Over the course of the consultation, more than 7,000 people responded providing over 20,000 comments.

The responses were submitted via a variety of methods with the most popular being email (58%).

Figure 3 opposite shows the location of the postcodes from which responses were received.

How does this consultation compare to other Local Plan consultations in the UK? We've benchmarked response numbers for this consultation against other boroughs in the area, take a look on page 17.

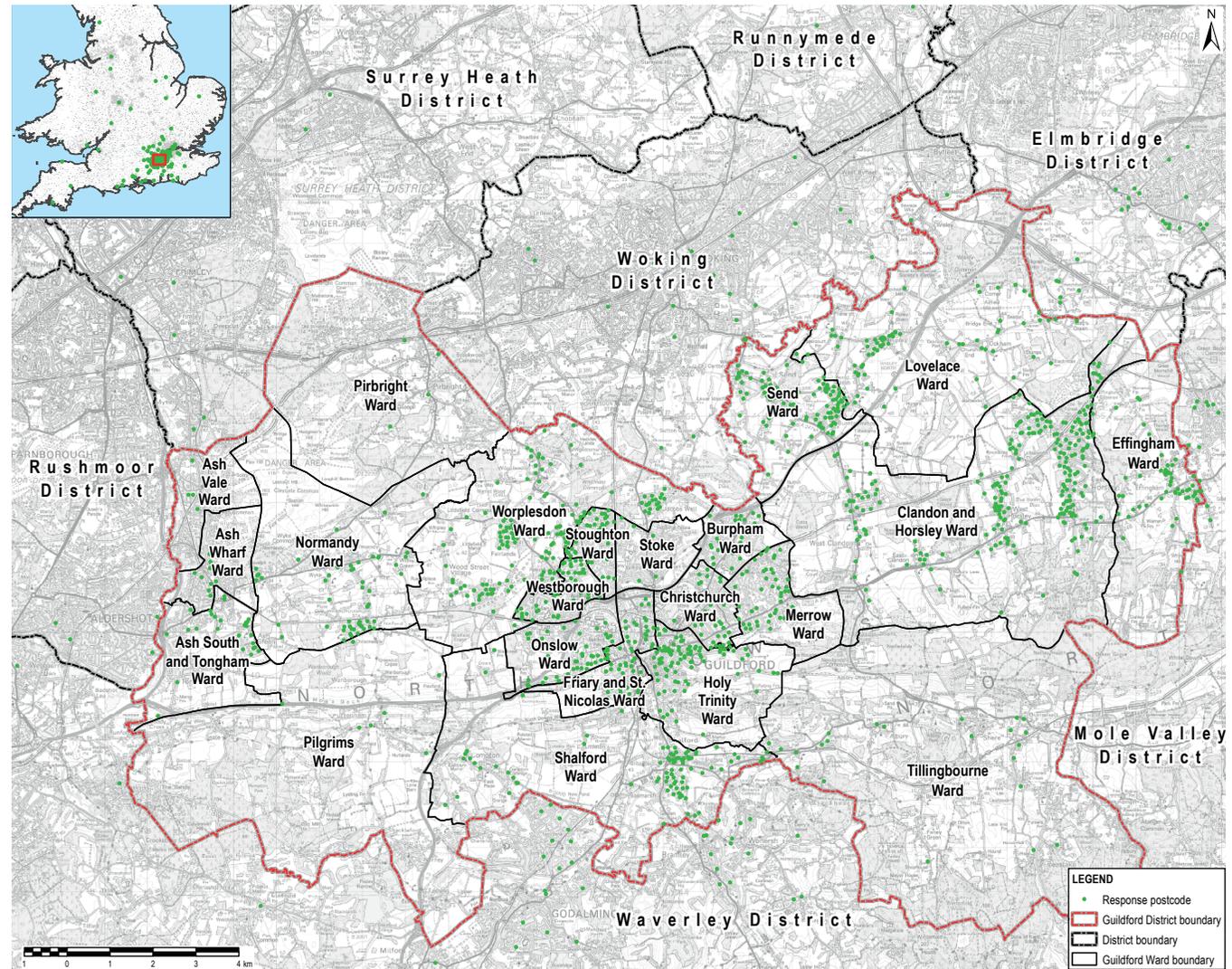


Figure 3: Guildford Draft Local Plan response location postcodes



Local Authority	Population (census 2011)	Respondents (number of people)	Date of consultation
1. Guildford	137,200	7,213	2014
2. City of York	198,051	4,945	2014
3. Waverley	121,600	4,265	2014
4. Windsor & Maidenhead	144,560	2,163	2012
5. Brentwood	73,600	1,944	2011
6. Warwick	136,000	1,743	2008
7. Wokingham	99,200	1,538	2008
8. East Hertfordshire	137,700	1,115	2014
9. Cheshire East	370,100	657	2013
10. Eastleigh	125,200	649	2013
11. Dacorum	144,800	617	2010
12. Woking	99,200	401	2009
13. Reigate & Banstead	137,800	360	2012
14. Winchester	116,600	193	2012
15. Runnymede	80,500	150	2012
16. City of London	7,400	80	2013
17. Epsom & Ewell	75,100	55	2006

Table 4: Comparing local authorities response number to Local Plan consultations in the UK

Benchmarking our approach

The guiding purpose of this consultation was to reach as many people as possible, to inform them about the consultation and encourage them to get involved and submit their comments on the Draft Local Plan.

We wanted to make sure that those who have been previously under-represented in responding to consultations, such as younger people and seldom heard people, were actively sought out and encouraged to take part.

As set out in this document, we have carried out an extensive consultation including workshops, public exhibitions and other events, made information on the Draft Local Plan widely available and publicised our activities in an effort to engage as many people as possible across the borough. However, it wasn't until the consultation closed and all the comments were received, that we were able to determine how successful we had been.

The Draft Local Plan consultation 2014, received the highest response of any previous Local Plan consultation for Guildford Borough Council. The number of people responding has increased by 38% since the Issues and Options consultation held in autumn 2013.

To give us a better understanding of how we have met our goal, we have not only compared this consultation to our own past processes, but also to those of other local authorities who have carried out consultation in their Local Plan making processes. Table 4 to the left considers how we compare to other local authorities in the UK.

A number of factors need to be considered when benchmarking the Guildford Draft Local Plan consultation response rates across other boroughs in the UK including:

- population numbers
- length of the consultation
- stage of the local plan making process i.e. issues and options, submission
- how actively a borough engages through consultation
- nature of the proposals included in the document.

Table 4 shows there's been a significantly higher response rate than other comparable authorities and boroughs in UK.



Next steps

At the start of this document we said we would present the findings of the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites consultation in two stages.

This document represents the first stage and looks at “how did we consult?” focusing on the process of engagement and how we tried to interact with Guildford communities over the course of the Draft Local Plan consultation.

The second stage will focus on “what people said”, which reports back and analyses the main issues raised, this will be presented in a separate document.

The extent of the alterations to the Local Plan will be partly dependent upon the outcomes of this consultation and the comments which have been raised. It is important to note that while the number of responses received is important to us, it is the strength of the planning arguments within the responses that will assist us best in progressing the Local Plan and informing the document going forward.

Our early assessments of the comments received indicate that not only has the number of individuals responding increased, but so has the quality and content of the comments being made. We are pleased that substantive comments were not just received from our residents and people who work locally, but also from our key stakeholders, neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers and landowners.

The Council is continuing work to consider the comments received and what this means for the evolving plan. You can keep up to date with the progress on the Local Plan and evidence based documents at www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan

How can you stay involved?

We would like to thank everyone who showed an interest in the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites and who took the time to get involved.

If you haven't already registered for notifications on our future consultation and would like to, you can do this at: <http://getinvolved.guildford.gov.uk>

In the meantime, if you would like to get in touch you can do so by email planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk or call the Planning Policy team on 01483 444471 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Contact us



Write to us

Planning Policy
Guildford Borough Council
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Guildford GU2 4BB

Planning policy team



Email us

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Call us

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