

General Statement of Information

Town and Country Planning, including Neighbourhood Planning

1. The Planning System

- 1.1 The planning system manages the use and development of land and buildings with the aim of creating sustainable places to live and work. Without a planning system in place, development would not be controlled and could take place anywhere, with considerable impact on people and the environment. Potential development activity is managed through planning applications, using local plans as a basis to make decisions.
- 1.2 The planning system has two parts which are usually the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority:
 - Plan-making - setting out proposals for development and policies to guide development over a period of time.
 - Development management – where planning decisions are made through the assessment of planning applications.
- 1.3 Not all forms of development require planning permission as some proposed development, depending on the scale and type, is covered by permitted development rights. For development that requires planning permission, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) is responsible for deciding whether the development should go ahead. Decisions on planning applications in the Cookham area are currently based on the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF), the adopted RBWM Borough Local Plan (BLP), and the adopted Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan. If 'made' (adopted) the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan will also become part of the Development Plan and be used in decision making on planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

2. National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The framework gives guidance to local planning authorities in drawing up development plans and on making decisions on planning applications. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets out core planning principles to be followed which include environmental, social and economic aspects. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) supports the NPPF and provides further guidance on planning issues such as neighbourhood planning.

3. Local Plans

- 3.1 Local Plans are prepared by Local Planning Authorities and set out the strategic priorities and planning policies for the local authority area. The policies in a local plan set out to deliver key development including homes and jobs required, the provision of retail and community facilities and infrastructure. Policies relating to managing climate change,

Planning have agreed with all the modifications proposed and were subsequently satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions and all other legislative requirements. The Council has confirmed the decision that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to Referendum in the Decision Statement published on 6th June 2025.

- 6.2 The Cookham Neighbourhood Plan referendum will be held on **17th July 2025**.
- 6.3 The proposed Neighbourhood Plan needs to gain the approval of the majority of voters (more than 50%) in the local community for the Local Planning Authority to 'make' the neighbourhood plan.
- 6.4 If the Neighbourhood Plan is made then it will become part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and will be used in the determination of planning applications in the Cookham neighbourhood plan area. If more people vote 'no' than 'yes', then the Neighbourhood Plan will not become part of the Development Plan for the local area.
- 6.5 Additional information on neighbourhood planning is available on the following website – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>.