

# The next local plan

The council is continuing to gather evidence to help shape the next plan for housing, transport, community services and facilities across the borough.

The current Local Plan was adopted in 2017 and sets out planning policies, how land is used, and what will be built where, until 2031. It also requires that a new plan is adopted by 2023, which deals with how the capacity of the local road network, especially the A2, can be dealt with.

The new Local Plan will also need to address the probability of the government increasing the borough's current housing target of 776 per year, to more than 1,050 from 2022.

Cllr Gerry Lewin, deputy leader of the council, and cabinet member for planning, said: "The government is setting councils the challenging task of addressing the housing crisis through ever-increasing targets for the number of homes to be built.

"There is still a great deal of evidence to be gathered and considered to support the review, and we want to re-emphasise that no decisions have been made about the kind of approach the review will take, or where additional development land allocations will be made. Much of the information we are currently gathering can be found on the council website.

"We are looking at the possibility of new garden communities being created, as a possible way of dealing with increased housing targets. We're now assessing four schemes that have been proposed and we hope to present the results of this technical assessment to councillors in January, when we would ask them whether we should keep pursuing these as a potential option for the future local plan.

"At this stage, nothing is decided, and we are open-minded about the way forward. This is why we asked people earlier in the year for their thoughts on how we can best approach the task ahead. The thousands of comments we received will be taken into account as we go forward, and we will be asking for more feedback on possible approaches in autumn next year."