

Hounslow Local Plan (2020-2041)

Examination Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 1: Legal Compliance and the Duty to Co-operate

London Borough of Hounslow Council Response

December 2025



**London Borough
of Hounslow**

Council's Response to Inspectors' Matters, Issues, Questions

Matter 1 – Legal Compliance and the Duty to Co-operate

Issue 1 – Whether the preparation of the Plan has complied with the relevant procedural, legal and other requirements?

Questions: Plan Preparation

Q1) Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and met the minimum consultation requirements in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations?

Q1) LBH Response:

1. Yes, the Hounslow Local Plan 2020-2041 (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with Document **ORD7**¹ and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This has involved ensuring that each stage of formal consultation (Regulation 18 and Regulation 19) has been undertaken in line with the minimum consultation requirements set out in the regulations through utilising various consultation methods outlined in **ORD7** (see Table 1, pp. 20-21). The Regulation 22 Statement (Document **S8**²) provides a summary of what was involved for each consultation at sections 2.1-3 (for Regulation 18) and 3.1-2 (for Regulation 19). The Council has exceeded the minimum standards set out in the regulations in order to ensure the Plan has been informed by meaningful and effective engagement.

Q2) Has the preparation of the Plan been carried out in accordance with the Local Development Scheme?

Q2) LBH Response:

2. Yes, the Plan has been prepared in line with the plan preparation programme set out in the Local Development Scheme (Document **ORD2**³). See Table 1 (p.7) for the plan production timetable.

¹ ORD7 [Statement of Community Involvement \(2020\)](#)

² S8 [Regulation 22 Consultation Statement](#)

³ ORD2 [Local Development Scheme \(March 2025\)](#)

Q3) Is the Plan sufficiently clear in terms of the policies of the existing development plan that would be superseded by its adoption, and whether there are any policies of the existing Local Plan that would not be superseded?

Q3) LBH Response:

3. This matter was raised by the Inspectors in their Initial Letter (Document **IN01**⁴). The Council's response (see Document **EX2**⁵) confirms that a suggested modification has been prepared to the Plan's appendices to provide further clarity, and this is set out in Document EX4⁶.

Questions: Habitats Regulations Assessment

Q4) How was the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) - document S6, carried out and was the methodology appropriate?

Q4) LBH Response:

4. The HRA (document **S6**)⁷ was carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in chapter 2 of the HRA. Figure 2 (in **S6**) provides an outline of the stages undertaken, which includes initial evidence gathering followed by 3 further stages or 'tasks': task 1 - screening for likely significant effects; task 2 - appropriate assessment (otherwise referred to as 'ascertaining the on-site integrity'); and task 3 - avoidance and mitigation (also referred to as 'mitigation measures and alternative solutions'). The methodology section provides further details of the activities undertaken at each of these stages and also includes a list of the other plans and projects identified for the 'in combination' assessment. Please see document **S6**, section 2.1-2.3, paragraphs 2.1.1-2, 2.2.1-9, 2.3.1-2 (pp. 11-14).

⁴ IN01 – [Inspectors' Initial Letter \(17 July 2025\)](#)

⁵ EX2 – [Council's Response to IN01 – Inspectors' Initial Letter \(Part 1\) \(29 August 2025\)](#)

⁶ EX4 – [Suggested modification to make explicit which development plan policies are superseded \(August 2025\)](#)

⁷ S6 [Hounslow Local Plan Review Habitat Regulations Assessment](#)

Q5) What potential impacts of the Plan were considered?

Q5) LBH Response:

5. The potential impacts of the Plan are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 'Potential Pathways of Impact'. Paragraph 3.1.2 (p.15) summarises these impact pathways as:

- Disturbance from recreational activities including urbanisation;
- Adverse effects on water quality;
- Changes to water levels; and
- Decrease in air quality

Chapter 4 'Screening of Likely Significant Effects (LSEs)' then screens for LSEs upon all Habitats Sites within 10km of the London Borough of Hounslow resulting from both the policies and site allocations set out in the Plan.

Q6) Would the HRA be reliant on proposed mitigation and avoidance measures, including any secured by other plans and projects, to ensure that they would avoid or reduce any potential for adverse effects on the integrity of any identified site within the national site network (formerly known as European or Natura 2000 sites), either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects?

Q6) LBH Response:

6. Document **S6** concludes at paragraph 5.1.1 that the Plan "... would not result in a likely significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans, on any European sites" (p.41). Therefore, the HRA is not reliant on proposed mitigation and avoidance measures, including any which would be secured by other plans or projects.

Q7) What were the conclusions of the HRA and how has it informed the Plan?

Q7) LBH Response:

7. Please see response to question 6 above.

Q8) Has sufficient engagement with Natural England taken place with respect to the HRA and if so, are they satisfied with the content of the Plan and associated evidence in the HRA?

Q8) LBH Response:

8. Yes, sufficient engagement has been undertaken with Natural England. Natural England were consulted at each stage of the plan-production process, including at Regulation 19 stage when a copy of the HRA was available for review. Document **S8**⁸ confirms that a response was received pursuant to Regulation 20, and **REP069**⁹ confirms that Natural England had no comments to make on the consultation documents.
9. Furthermore, Natural England have been separately invited to engage with the Council under the duty to cooperate at key stages throughout plan preparation. Document **S10**¹⁰ confirms that Natural England were invited to engage at both Regulation 18 stage and Regulation 19 stage, however these invitations were not taken up.
10. The Council considers it has made every effort to engage Natural England and the response received at Regulation 19 stage confirms that Natural England raise no comments or concerns on the content of the Plan, nor the associated HRA.

Q9) Have any concerns been raised regarding the HRA and if so, what is the Council's response to these?

Q9) LBH Response:

11. No concerns regarding the HRA have been raised through duly made responses to either the Regulation 18 or Regulation 19 consultations.

Q10) Overall, have the requirements of the Habitats Regulations been met?

⁸ S8 [Regulation 22 Consultation Statement](#)

⁹ S9 [Link to Representations made pursuant to Regulation 20 \(in response to consultation at Regulation 19 Stage\)\(Redacted\)](#)

¹⁰ S10 [Duty to Cooperate Statement](#)

Q10) LBH Response:

12. Yes, the requirements of the Habitats Regulations have been met. The HRA has been undertaken in line with the regulations requiring appropriate assessment of plans and projects by a competent authority, as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as well as necessary scoping, screening, and consideration of mitigation and alternative solutions. Please see document **S6** section 1.2, paragraphs 1.2.1-5 (pp.6-7).

Questions: Sustainability Appraisal

Q11) Does the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) included in the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) - documents S3, S4 and S5, meet the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment?

Q11) LBH Response:

13. Yes, the IIA report (document **S3**¹¹) – in addition to the Non-technical Summary (**S4**¹²) and Technical Annex (**S5**¹³) – includes a Sustainability Appraisal component which also meets the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA regulations).
14. Document **S3**, section 1.2, paragraph 1.2.1 (p.1) explains the various requirements and duties fulfilled by the IIA. Paragraphs 1.3.1-3 (p.2) explain how the IIA process is intended to meet the SEA regulations by providing a report that is consulted alongside the draft Plan at Regulation 19 stage. Paragraphs 1.3.4-5 explain how the structure of the IIA report follows the key requirements stipulated by SEA regulations through answering the following three questions:
1. *‘What has plan-making/ IIA involved up to this point? (including in relation to ‘reasonable alternatives’)’*
 2. *‘What are the IIA findings at this stage? (i.e., in relation to the current draft plan).’*
 3. *‘What happens next?’*

¹¹ S3 [Hounslow Local Plan Review Integrated Impact Assessment Report](#)

¹² S4 [Hounslow Local Plan Review Integrated Impact Assessment Non-technical Summary](#)

¹³ S5 [Hounslow Local Plan Review Integrated Impact Assessment Technical Annex](#)

15. Chapter 2 sets out the scope of the IIA, with paragraph 2.1.1 (p.5) explaining the basis for this within the SEA regulations.
16. Paragraph 7.2.4 (p.56) outlines how the methodological approach to assessing the likely significant effects of the Plan has taken account of the effect characteristics and ‘significance criteria’ presented within Schedules 1 and 2 of the SEA Regulations.
17. Section 10.2 ‘Monitoring Programme’, paragraph 1.2.1 (p.88) refers to Article 10.1 of the SEA Directive as regards the need to ‘... monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes’.
18. Please note that Appendix A provides further explanation of the regulatory basis for the approach taken within the IIA.

Q12) Is the methodology in the SA appropriate and robust and was it based on reasonable and up-to-date evidence?

Q12) LBH Response:

19. Yes. Document **S3**, section 2.1 explains how the scope of the IIA has been informed at various stages with input from the consultation bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England). A scoping report for the withdrawn Local Plan Reviews (Documents **ORD8**¹⁴, **ORD8a**¹⁵ and **ORD8c**¹⁶) was initially consulted upon in July 2016. The issues identified at this scoping stage were then translated into an IIA ‘framework’ of objectives and appraisal questions. Paragraph 2.1.3 (p.5) goes on to explain that, given the time elapsed between the release of the Scoping Report for the adopted Local Plan 2015 (Documents **ADP2** and **ADP2a**¹⁷) and the current IIA process relating to the emerging Plan, the Council viewed it appropriate to revisit the scope for the IIA in 2023 (to coincide with the Regulation 18 consultation), and consulted upon a further Scoping Paper 2023 which reviewed the evidence base “... with a focus on the

¹⁴ ORD8 [Hounslow Local Plan Review Volume 2: Site Allocations](#)

¹⁵ ORD8a [Hounslow Local Plan Review Volume 3: West of Borough Plan \(Submission Version\)](#)

¹⁶ ORD8c [Hounslow Local Plan Review Volume 4: Great West Corridor Plan \(Submission Version\)](#)

¹⁷ ADP2 [Adopted Hounslow Local Plan Volume 1 2015-2030](#) and ADP2a [Adopted Hounslow Local Plan Volume 2 2015-2030](#)

key changes to the policy context and baseline which have taken place in the interim”. Comments relating to the Scoping Paper 2023 were considered and these informed a refreshed IIA framework contained in Document **S3** at Table 1.1 (pp.5-6) and the key issues listed at paragraph 2.1.5 (pp.6-9).

20. The SA methodology set out in Document **S3** is appropriate and robust in its approach to the assessment of reasonable alternatives and of the Plan policies. These assessments utilised the latest evidence available at the relevant stage of the plan making process. Document **S3** Appendix A provides further details around how the methodology complies with regulatory requirements.

<p>Q13) What were the conclusions of the SA, to what extent did they inform the preparation of the Plan and how were reasonable alternatives considered?</p>

Q13) LBH Response:

21. The SA undertaken as part of the IIA is an iterative process, which has informed and influenced plan making throughout.
22. Document **S3**, chapter 4 (pp.11-16) sets out how reasonable alternatives (RAs) were established following the exploration of 5 themes: sites for potential growth; housing growth, employment growth, the location of tall buildings, and transport (see paragraph 4.1). The RAs were selected after having considered the objectives and geographical scope of the plan.
23. As section 4.2 (paragraphs 4.2.1-6) explains, the options around sites were informed by an appraisal of constraints and opportunities for each site in the ‘long list’, and the outcomes of this are set out in detail within the site proformas contained in the IIA Technical Annexe (document **S5**). For the remaining strategic growth options (housing, employment, tall buildings and transport), these are set out in more detail within Document **S3** in Chapter 4, with the assessment of the likely significant effects of each option set out in Chapter 5 (pp.17-51). Paragraphs 5.1.1-2 summarise the methodology used in assessing RAs.

24. This assessment of RAs, with the various evidence base studies for the Local Plan, informed the development of the preferred approach to the potential locations for proposed development, and the distribution and approach to future development within the Plan. Chapter 6 (pp.52-54) provides an overview of the Council's reasons for selecting the preferred approach.
25. Moving on to the assessment of the Plan itself, Chapters 7 and 8 provide the appraisal findings, and Chapter 9 sets out the conclusions of the appraisal. The appraisal notes a mixture of significant positive, minor positive, minor negative, neutral to minor positive and broadly neutral effects when considering the Plan against the IIA topics. The IIA also notes some uncertainty under the cultural heritage and landscape IIA topics because it is difficult to predict effects with regard to impacts on cultural heritage and landscape as they are dependent on detailed design and layout of development; however, the findings recognise that the policy framework provides for mitigation of adverse impacts on heritage assets and landscape character as a result of development.
26. Section 9.2 (pp.84-86) includes an assessment of cumulative effects when considering the 'in-combination effects' of other plans and proposals. Paragraph 9.2.7 concludes that for many potential cumulative effects, the policy approaches proposed by the Plan will help reduce the significance of identified in-combination impacts, with monitoring being essential to ensure that any unforeseen adverse environmental effects are highlighted and remedial action taken.
27. Section 9.3, paragraph 9.3.1 (p.86) confirms that there are no specific recommendations made at this stage, however the IIA does note that careful monitoring will be required to ensure development is delivered in line with the policy framework and objectives (a proposed monitoring programme is considered within section 10.2, pp.88-89).

<p>Q14) Are the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the Plan adequately and accurately assessed in the SA?</p>
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Q14) LBH Response:

28. Yes, see responses to questions 11, 12 and 13 above.

Questions: Climate Change

Q15) Does the Plan accord with s19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) by including policies that are designed to secure that the development and use of the land in the area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change?

Q15) LBH Response:

29. Yes, the Plan accords with s19(1A) of the 2004 Act. This is embedded within the vision and strategic objectives (see 7, B., p.21). The policies which seek to secure development and uses of land which contribute toward the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change are contained within Chapters 6, 7, 9 and 10. As requested by the Inspectors in Document **IN01**, the Council has prepared a Topic Paper (Document **EX10**¹⁸) which sets out further details of how the policies relating to energy and carbon reduction have been developed, including how the approach accords with the legislation.

Questions: Equality and Diversity

Q16) How does the Plan seek to ensure that due regard is had to the three aims expressed in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to those who have a relevant protected characteristic?

Q16) LBH Response:

30. The Council considers that the Plan has due regard to the three aims set out at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and has considered these in light of potential impacts upon those individuals or groups with protected characteristics.

31. As set out in response to question 11, Document **S3** takes an integrated approach to the assessment of the Plan, and this includes an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) component. This has informed the development of the IIA theme 'Equalities, community, and wellbeing' and the associated IIA objectives against which the RAs and the policy framework have been assessed.

¹⁸ EX10 – [Energy and Carbon Reduction Topic Paper \(October 2025\)](#)

32. In addition, the Council has also undertaken its own EqlA (document **ORD1**¹⁹) to support the preparation of the Plan, and to evidence how it has discharged its Equality Act 2010 duties, including the Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED). This includes a detailed assessment of how the policies and proposals may give rise to either positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups with protected characteristics, and any potential mitigation measures that may be required (see Table on pp.11-27), focusing primarily upon Section 149, part 11, (1), a) and b). In addition, a specific summary of how the Plan will address Section 149, part 11, (1), c) is provided on p.29.

Q17) Is there any substantive evidence to indicate that the requirements of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 have not been met?

Q17) LBH Response:

33. No substantive evidence has been received which suggests that the Council has not met the requirements of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the preparation of the Plan.

Q18) Is there any evidence that the Plan would have significant effects on equalities that have not been identified in the IIA?

Q18) LBH Response:

34. As per the response to Q.16 above, the key document for assessing significant effects upon those individuals or groups with protected characteristics is set out in Document **ORD1**. The EqlA component within the IIA (Document **S3**) has been informed by Document **ORD1**.

35. Whilst document **ORD1** notes that a minor negative impact could result from an inability to meet the full Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision requirements after year 10 of the plan period, the Council has taken steps to address and ultimately mitigate this issue. The Council refers to the answers to Q1 and Q7 of Matter 3 Issue 3. Having regard to the policy approaches referred to above, the Council considers that this does not represent

¹⁹ ORD1 [Hounslow Local Plan 2020-2041 Equality Impact Assessment \(2025\)](#)

a significant effect on equalities, and the Council has assessed this and sought to provide suitable mitigation in line with its duty under the Equality Act 2010.

36. Document **ORD1** also notes that whilst comments were raised at Regulation 19 stage relating to concerns that pupils of an existing special educational needs school in the vicinity of the site allocation at Land at Hatton Fields Site (allocation no. 57, Document **S1a**²⁰) would be negatively impacted by any development on this site, it concludes that this is a high-level allocation policy, and any such impacts cannot be considered in full at this stage. Instead, it recommends that a further assessment of any potential specific equalities impacts affecting this group should take place in the event that a detailed development proposal comes forward on this site. As such, it is considered that this would not represent a significant effect on equalities.

37. Document **S3**, section 8.5 sets out the assessment findings under the 'Equalities, community and wellbeing' IIA topic (pp.68-70). Section 9.1, paragraph 9.1.1 (p.83) concludes that significant positive effects are predicted under the equalities, community, and wellbeing IIA topic given that the spatial strategy seeks to distribute growth relatively evenly across the borough, which means that the most deprived areas of Hounslow should benefit from growth and associated regeneration. In addition, the IIA also notes that the policy framework seeks to protect existing, and deliver new, community facilities.

Questions: Duty to Co-operate (DtC), General Conformity with the London Plan 2021 and Other Legal Compliance

Q19) Has the Council engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with all relevant organisations on strategic matters of relevance, including in terms of housing, employment and infrastructure provision, as required by the DtC and to maximise the effectiveness of the preparation of the Plan?

Q19) LBH Response:

38. Yes. The Duty to Cooperate Statement (Document **S10**) explains how the Council has engaged with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies, and it includes

²⁰ S1a [Hounslow Local Plan 2020-2041 Proposed Submission Version: Chapter 12 - Site Allocations](#)

information relating to the Council's membership of two key strategic planning partnerships (the West London Alliance and Heathrow Spatial Planning Group). A duty to cooperate (DtC) summary table is provided on p.8 of **S10** which describes where organisations have responded to formal requests to engage under the duty, when meetings took place, and whether it has been agreed to pursue a statement of common ground (SoCG) to demonstrate joint-working on strategic matters. A more detailed record of engagement is set out in section 5 (pp.10-27) and section 6 (pp.28-55).

39. Various SoCGs have been completed, and those prepared ahead of submission were included in the submission library (see documents **S10a**²¹, **S10b**²², and **s10c**²³). As Document **S10** was completed at the point of submission, most of the SoCG described as being 'in progress' at that point in time have since been completed and these have been added to the examination library (see documents **EX5a**²⁴, **EX5b**²⁵, **EX5c**²⁶, **EX5d**²⁷, **EX5e**²⁸, **EX5f**²⁹, **EX5g**³⁰, and **EX5h**³¹).
40. The Plan has been prepared in line with effective and ongoing joint working with the Mayor of London, neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies, and this has been demonstrated through the production of a number of SoCGs. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with this duty and is consistent with requirements around maintaining effective cooperation set out in the NPPF at paragraphs 24 to 27.

²¹ S10a [Environment Agency & LB Hounslow Statement of Common Ground \(2025\)](#)

²² S10b [LB Ealing & LB Hounslow Statement of Common Ground \(2025\)](#)

²³ S10c [Surrey County Council & LB Hounslow Statement of Common Ground \(2025\)](#)

²⁴ EX5a – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and TfL \(August 2025\)](#)

²⁵ EX5b – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and National Highways \(August 2025\)](#)

²⁶ EX5c – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and LB Richmond upon Thames \(September 2025\)](#)

²⁷ EX5d – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and LB Hammersmith and Fulham \(September 2025\)](#)

²⁸ EX5e – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and the Mayor of London \(October 2025\)](#)

²⁹ EX5f – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and LB Hillingdon \(October 2025\)](#)

³⁰ EX5g – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and Spelthorne BC \(October 2025\)](#)

³¹ EX5h – [Statement of Common Ground between LB Hounslow and Historic England \(December 2025\)](#)

Q20) Are there any inter-relationships with other authorities in terms of housing markets, economic activity, travel to work areas and the market for employment land and premises, which have not been specifically addressed?

Q20) LBH Response:

41. All key strategic inter-relationships and cross-boundary matters have been fully addressed through joint-working, and the Council has complied with the duty to cooperate and NPPF paragraphs 24-27, as set out in the answer to Q19 of Matter 1 Issue 1, above.

Q21) Are there any outstanding concerns from adjoining authorities or other DtC bodies regarding the DtC? If so, how has the Council sought to address any issues raised? Have all Statements of Common Ground identified been submitted?

Q21) LBH Response:

42. There are no outstanding concerns from adjoining authorities or other DtC bodies regarding whether the Council has complied with the DtC. The Council has reached out to all authorities and bodies where a strategic matter has been identified and, where a response to a formal request to engage has been received, the Council has sought to agree positions on these matters within a SoCG (see response to question 19). Of the remaining SoCG identified within Document **S10**, the joint statement between the Council, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew remains outstanding and this will be agreed and added to the examination library ahead of the hearing sessions. The SoCG between the Council and Historic England was completed on 8th December 2025 (see Document **EX5h**).

Q22) In overall terms, is the Plan in general conformity with the spatial development strategy for London (i.e. the London Plan)?

Q22) LBH Response:

43. Yes. As per section 24(4)(a) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 21 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Council made a formal request for the Mayor of London's opinion on the general conformity of the draft Local Plan with the London Plan. A response was received

confirming the Mayor's opinion that the proposed submission version of the Plan is in general conformity with the London Plan 2021 (see Documents **S8** and **S9**, specifically REP074, p. 2 & 30). This is further evidenced through the SoCG agreed with the Mayor of London (Document **EX5e**, see paragraph 4.3.2, p.6).