

## Hart District Council meeting with Keith Holland

10.30- 1pm Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015

### Committee Room 1

Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet GU51 4AE

## AGENDA

- 1 Welcome and introductions
- 2 Update since last meeting and key challenges
- 3 Questions

### Briefing note:

1. A note of the last meeting is attached.
2. At the last meeting Keith heard about Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath undertaking a joint SHMA, and concerns around Hart having to address unmet need in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath. The latest estimated housing shortfalls in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath are:

|   | <b>Hart</b> | <b>Rushmoor</b>    | <b>Surrey Heath</b> |
|---|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Objectively assessed housing need 2011-2032 | 7,534       | 9,822              | 7,057               |
| <b>Estimated Shortfall</b>                  | <b>n/a</b>  | <b>1,600-1,700</b> | <b>1,400</b>        |

3. The SHMA points out that whilst the HMA need is broken down by district, it is the overall figure for the HMA as a whole that is important. The provision of jobs and homes in one local authority area will contribute as effectively to the overall requirement as provision in any of the other authorities.
4. Hart wishes to minimise any housing shortfalls in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath so that extra growth beyond Hart's own needs is minimised.
5. Three different timelines for the three authorities' local plans led to debate about whether Hart (currently the frontrunner) could meet its own housing needs, and undertake an early

review once any unmet needs in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath were pinned down. In essence the advice from Keith at the last meeting was that if there are genuine unknowns, then an early review to address unmet need could possibly be justified, but equally, one cannot be seen to ‘kick a difficult issue into the long grass’.

## Update since last meeting

6. Following consultation on housing development options in summer / autumn 2014, Hart Council agreed a broad preferred strategy ‘subject to testing’ that meets Hart’s own housing needs (Committee Report (Paper C) and minutes available at [http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4\\_The\\_Council/Council\\_meetings/M\\_Archive/14%2011%20Council.pdf](http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Council_meetings/M_Archive/14%2011%20Council.pdf)).

7. Essentially the preferred strategy is:

| <b>Recommended Preferred Housing Distribution Strategy, <u>subject to testing</u>:</b>  |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Development (including windfalls) <u>beyond</u> the SPA 5km zone of influence (this comprises the settlements of Odiham, North Warnborough, South Warnborough, Greywell, and Long Sutton) | 150 – 200 dwellings     |
| Development <u>within</u> existing settlement boundaries (including windfalls) from those settlements that lie <u>within</u> the SPA 5km zone of influence.                               | Approx. 750 dwellings   |
| Development <u>adjoining</u> settlements <u>within</u> the SPA 5km boundary zone of influence   | 100 – 650 dwellings     |
| Strategic urban extensions (no individual site identified)  | 0 - 600 dwellings       |
| New settlement at Winchfield  | 1,800 - 2,400 dwellings |
|   | <b>4,000 dwellings</b>  |

8. Site assessment work is underway to appraise all the SHLAA sites in Hart. For strategic site options, the Council is engaging with key service providers and agencies to understand the infrastructure issues associated with them.

9. Barratts/Gallagher, and another site promoter (Pearson Strategic), are active in the Winchfield area undertaking land assembly and technical work to demonstrate deliverability of a new settlement.
10. The Council is also seeking to engage ATLAS to assist the process of developing a vision for the new settlement and creating a process to develop plan policy and masterplan, involving the community, landowners and developers.
11. The **Joint Hart, Rushmoor, Surrey Heath SHMA** has been published in final form. The objectively assessed housing needs are the same as the draft

|   | <b>Hart</b> | <b>Rushmoor</b> | <b>Surrey Heath</b> |
|---|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Objectively assessed housing need 2011-2032 | 7,534       | 9,822           | 7,057               |

12. All three authorities have updated their **SHLAAs** to a common methodology.
13. A **draft Joint Employment Land Review** for Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath (drafted by Rushmoor officers) has been prepared. It identifies the need for, and supply of, employment land (office and industry) across the Functional Economic Area as a whole. It does not break the need and supply down by district. It identifies a surplus of employment land across the FEA.
14. Originally the ELR recommended the protection of certain employment sites across the FEA. However this caused concern to Hart Members who want to make sure that any potential housing shortfalls in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath are minimised before agreeing that any employment sites should be protected. The site recommendations in the ELR have therefore been removed.
15. The Draft ELR goes out for consultation imminently.

### **Independent review of SHLAAs and the Joint ELR**

16. The Draft Joint ELR, and each authority's SHLAA, are currently being reviewed by PAS on the following basis:

*Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath form a housing market area and have undertaken a joint SHMA. As part of the work looking at future housing delivery, each authority has (or is) updating their SHLAA, hopefully along similar methodologies. They have agreed that it would be useful to get each of the SHLAA's independently audited to help inform discussions with Members that each authority has taken a robust approach to the SHLAA process consistent with national guidance, whether the assumptions are reasonable and whether there are any opportunities that have not been explored by the relevant authorities.*

*In relation to the ELR which has been undertaken in house (led by Rushmoor) jointly for the three authorities, they are taking a draft to a Joint Member Group on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Once they have incorporated any comments, this will also be in a position to be audited, so this is likely to be mid – late March.*

## **Local plan timelines**

17. Hart is aiming for autumn 2015 for pre-submission draft plan (Reg 19) (Hart is not doing a consultation draft under Reg 18).
18. Rushmoor are aiming to publish a Reg 18 consultation draft plan in summer 2015 prior to Hart publishing its pre-submission version. The Rushmoor draft plan is likely to show a housing shortfall of around 1,600 dwellings. It is also expected to show a number of employment sites protected for employment use.
19. Surrey Heath is not making any decisions about its local plan until after the election. They do not seem to be under same pressure as Hart regarding ad hoc planning applications in the countryside – due to green belt.

## **The next stages:**

- Targeted consultation with key stakeholders and property agents on draft ELR
- Feedback from PAS on each authority's SHLAA and on the Joint ELR
- Hart to scrutinise Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SHLAAs to see if there is any more housing capacity whilst continuing its plan process.
- Rushmoor are preparing a paper to justify protection of certain employment sites in Rushmoor, in support of a draft plan for consultation in the summer 2015. This may be discussed at the next Joint Member Liaison Group.
- Surrey Heath are currently going back to their SHLAA and reviewing whether extra capacity can be found e.g. through density assumptions.

## **Questions**

### **Duty to Cooperate**

1. Does the idea of Hart planning to meet its own housing needs, and addressing any shortfalls in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath through an early review, still hold some credence?
2. If Hart looks at Rushmoor's draft plan in the summer, and feels they could deliver more homes, Hart could object to their draft. What would be the implications / risks of this under the duty to cooperate?

3. How far can we go in pressing Rushmoor and Surrey Heath to release employment land for housing?
4. If Rushmoor present a plan for consultation with a shortfall to which we object, can we omit their shortfall whilst pledging a review if the Rushmoor shortfall crystallises?
5. If Hart finds no reasonable grounds to object to Rushmoor's draft plan, despite it showing a considerable shortfall in housing, and given Surrey Heath's circumstances, how should Hart proceed with its own plan? For example, can it safely carry on planning to meet its own needs? If not, what proportion of Rushmoor's shortfall should it try and plan for? Should it agree to take only half of Rushmoor's unmet need, on the basis that until Surrey Heath adopt their plan, Hart can challenge their capacity assumptions?
6. In terms of testing alternative strategies in Hart, what is your advice regarding the potential unmet need in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath? Should Hart test options that meet part or all of a potential shortfall in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath?
7. In terms of meeting the need for economic development, the ELR gives an FEA-wide picture, but it doesn't break the needs down by local authority area. How should the three authorities proceed in terms of planning to meet the needs of the economy in this context via three separate plans? The reason for asking this is that the original Rushmoor ELR recommended a number of sites be protected, and that no new sites need to be allocated. However, if Hart has a new settlement, one would expect that to provide new employment land, freeing up sites in Rushmoor/Surrey Heath for housing. Although we are all preparing separate local plans, would one approach be for the three authorities to agree how employment needs should be met across the FEA, and then reflect that agreement in separate plans?
8. Alternatively, would an inspector expect the ELR to break the need and demand for office and industry by down to district/borough level (in the same way that the SHMA breaks needs down by district/borough) to give a start point for each authority?

### **New settlement**

9. What evidence would an inspector require to justify the inclusion of a new settlement in the plan, particularly in terms of:
  - Evaluation of alternative sites and strategies; and

- Deliverability of the new settlement?
10. To ensure the delivery of the infrastructure the Council would want a detailed masterplan approved prior to any planning applications for a new settlement being received. It would also want an outline planning application for the whole settlement. What is your advice on how to achieve this? For example, should the local plan be supported by a detailed masterplan? Or should a masterplan and delivery plan be prepared as a separate DPD or SPD following on from the local plan, particularly given the pressing need to get the plan in place? Could the Council realistically hold-off any piecemeal planning applications for parts of the new settlement whilst a full masterplan is being prepared?
11. Winchfield is the preferred location for a new settlement. Winchfield Parish are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which does not reflect the Council's preferred strategy for a new settlement there. Can you confirm that the local plan would render the Neighbourhood Plan redundant? Until a local plan is in place, the Neighbourhood Plan would effectively prevent any premature planning applications being successful?

### **Role of vision in testing options**

12. What is the role of a vision and plan objectives in terms of shaping and justifying the final strategy? Should they be used as an input into the evaluation of alternative strategies? Or would that be seen as prejudicing an otherwise objective assessment of alternatives against standard planning and sustainability appraisal criteria? For example, if the vision is to have a new settlement, based on a political preference, then strategies that don't include a new settlement will automatically perform less well against the vision.

### **Green Belt**

13. Do you think the present policy position that Green Belt is effectively sacrosanct will remain after the election?

### **Hart's landscape**

14. Hart's countryside, other than SPA, SSSIs etc does not benefit from Green Belt, AONB or similar protected designations listed in footnote 9 of the NPPF. Would a Hart assessment of 'landscape capacity' provide a robust defence for preventing development in areas where there is deemed to be low capacity for development (i.e. development would have quite a severe impact).

## **Local and Strategic Gaps**

15. The current Hart plan has local and strategic gaps which were designated when Structure Plans were around. Do you foresee any issue continuing with these policies in the next plan under the NPPF?