

CABINET**DATE OF MEETING: 6 NOVEMBER 2014****TITLE OF REPORT: HART LOCAL PLAN: PREFERRED STRATEGY FOR HOUSING GROWTH****Report of: Joint Chief Executive****Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen Parker, Planning****I PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To recommend a preferred housing distribution, subject to testing, for the purposes of preparing a local plan. This report deals only with the preferred options for growth at a strategic level so that testing for delivery can be commenced. It does not address the details of delivery. That will be determined through assessment with further reports back to Cabinet through the Local Plan Steering Group. At this stage therefore, the figures as set out in Appendix I are essentially indicative and will inevitably be adjusted in response to testing and assessment. One tested, the final preferred approach will form the basis of a Publication Local Plan which will be subject to wide public consultation in the summer of 2015.

2 RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- A. That the strategy as set out in Appendix I is the Council's preferred housing distribution, subject to testing
- B. That the Local Plan should seek to identify a supply of specific, developable sites¹ for the first 10 years of the Local Plan following its adoption.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In August the Council consulted on a Housing Development Options Consultation Paper. The paper recognised that across the Hart/Rushmoor/Surrey Heath Housing Market Area (SHMA) there was a need to deliver in total 24,413 new homes between 2011 to 2032. Hart's share is approximately **7,534** which is an average per annum of **359** dwellings.
- 3.2 Taking this into account Hart's current land supply (at 14th May 2014)

SHMA-based 'objectively assessed housing needs' for Hart	7,534
Housing completions for the three years 2011/12 to 2013/14	-792
Outstanding planning permissions (at 14th May 2014)	-1,851
Major sites identified by the Council for growth (Edenbrook II and North East Hook)	-743
Objectively assessed housing need where sites remain to be identified (residual requirement)	4,018

¹ To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

- 3.3 At this stage therefore, the new Local Plan needs to find sufficient land for at least **4,000** new homes²

4 FEEDBACK FROM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Council published a Housing Development Options Paper for consultation in summer 2014. In summary the options were:

Option 1 – Settlement Focus

Option 2 – Dispersal Strategy

Option 3 – Focused Growth (Strategic Urban Extensions)

Option 4 – Focused Growth (New Settlement)

Option 5 – Focusing development away from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Zone of Influence

The Paper recognised that whilst it may be possible for one of the options to meet this need in full, it is much more likely that two or more of the options will need to be taken forward in combination to ensure not only that overall housing numbers can be delivered within the plan period, but that a steady supply of housing can be achieved throughout that period.

- 4.2 In summary the key points emerging from the consultation are:

- There were 685 responses from residents, developers, planning agents, landowners and statutory consultees.
- When asked for their preference for the Options for growth **Option 1 (within settlements) and Option 4 (new settlement) emerge as the two preferred options. They are followed by Option 3 (Strategic urban extensions), Option 2 (Dispersal) and Option 5 (SPA avoidance) in that order.**
- When asked whether even the smallest villages ('Tier 5' villages) should see some new housing. 322 respondents said 'yes'; 151 said 'no'.
- Rushmoor and Surrey Heath both responded along the lines that a combination of options should be used as this would provide scope to meet any unmet needs that could arise in Rushmoor and/or Surrey Heath.
- Hampshire County Council prefers strategic developments to dispersal as it offers more scope for on-site school provision. In particular HCC states that the new settlement option provides the best opportunity to provide additional primary schools and to consider the provision of a new secondary school.
- Thames Water identified several areas with capacity issues in different parts of the district, and on the implications of different options. Large-scale development, particularly a new settlement, offers the best opportunity to deliver infrastructure solutions particularly for waste water.
- A number of responses challenge the SHMA methodology and suggest that the District's housing need is higher.
- 27 new or amended sites were submitted through the consultation, including:
 - a proposal for a new community of around 1,700 dwellings (plus community facilities including a secondary school) at Lodge Farm (Newlands) north of the A287 near North Warnborough;
 - 250 dwellings at Bramshill Police College

- 400 dwellings at Guillemont Park (replacing vacant offices on land adjoining that which is currently the subject of an appeal for 140 dwellings (100 in Hart).

5 COMMENTARY

- 5.1 The next stage in the process is to consider how the delivery of the identified housing need should be distributed across the District. It is essential that this is done now otherwise Officers cannot commission the necessary assessments to move the Plan further forward.
- 5.2 The initial assessment of potential delivery follows a relatively high level assessment of SHLAA site availability. It does not address the details of delivery. That will be determined through assessment with further reports back to Cabinet through the Local Plan Steering Group. At this stage therefore, any figures quoted are essentially indicative and will inevitably be adjusted in response to testing and assessment.
- 5.3 Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan requires priority to be given to development avoiding the need for SPA mitigation. In effect the Council needs to consider first how much development can reasonably be accommodated in the area beyond the 5km SPA zone of influence.
- 5.4 This means that **Option 5– SPA Avoidance** must be considered first. This Option has the potential to deliver between **150-200** new homes³. This includes an element for “windfalls”.
- 5.5 **Option 1 – Settlement Focus** would deliver new development within existing boundaries within the rest of the District’s main towns/villages⁴. Taking into account “windfall” and identified SHLAA sites, the capacity is estimated to be approximately **750** dwellings. This figure may ultimately rise if land not currently in the SHLAA, such as empty or obsolete business premises in Ancells Farm, Fleet or Bartley Wood, Hook for example, are released for development. This latter potential opportunity will be pursued with some rigor throughout next Spring.
- 5.6 This leaves the Local Plan to identify land for a further **3050-3100** new homes.

Residual Housing requirement	4,000
SPA Avoidance	150-200
Settlement Focus	750
	3050-3100

- 5.7 **Option 2 (Dispersal)** has the theoretical capacity to meet all remaining residual need. However, any over reliance on a dispersal strategy is, from experience, fraught with difficulties. It removes the element of certainty in terms of housing delivery. It would potentially leave the Council in no better position than it is now with adhoc planning decisions being made whilst the Council continually sought to eke out a ongoing 5 year land supply. It would also undermine the link between development and the delivery of new infrastructure - schools, roads, utilities etc. A more balanced

³ This essentially comprises the settlements of Odiham, North Warnborough, Long Sutton South Warnborough, and Greywell

⁴ This does not include the area subject to Option 5 -SPA Avoidance

approach is recommended to demonstrate deliverability but whatever the case, the Council must seek to ensure that it can demonstrate for the first 10 years following adoption, the Local Plan that it has identified a supply of specific, developable sites.

- 5.8 **Option 3 – Focused Growth (Strategic Urban Extensions)** would greatly confirm the certainty of future housing delivery, particularly for ongoing 5-10 year land supply purposes. It would also remove any uncertainty over excessive reliance on Option 2 – Dispersal. Further site assessment is needed to determine true suitability and quantum but it would help fill the need to provide a potential supply during the middle of the plan period prior to delivery of the new settlement option (Option 4). Acceptance of this Option, combined with Option 4 (New Settlement) would also potentially give the Council greater flexibility for change if in future it needs to adjust its housing delivery to accommodate any unmet needs from elsewhere within the housing market area⁵.
- 5.9 To bring certainty to the objective of identifying sufficient sites for delivery it is recommended that the decision is made now to test the preference for a new settlement: **Option 4 – Focused Growth (New Settlement)**. The estimate is that it could deliver between **1800-2400** dwellings within the Plan period. The only area where that scale of growth could realistically be delivered is centred on the area that comprises Winchfield.
- 5.10 The challenge to the Council is whether the scale of ambition for a new settlement solution is matched by a real and honest desire to meet the significant housing demand. The new Settlement option can, if designed and structured building on lessons from the past, provide a vehicle for large scale housing delivery in a manner sympathetic to the landscape as distinct from other forms of development. It is the best option to deliver a real community along with the necessary infrastructure (shops, employment, roads, schools, utilities etc). However, one has to be realistic about delivery and the timescales involved. Viability is also critical. The Council will also need a very early stage to consider what delivery model⁶ is best placed to ensure the delivery of this option and also assesses measures to compensate for any potential housing shortfall if delivery of the new settlement option is impeded or significantly delayed.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no unbudgeted financial implications arising from this report.

⁵ The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to meet their own housing need and meet the needs of other authorities in the same housing market area as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the Framework. In this regard both Rushmoor (1,700) and Surrey Heath (1,400) have indicated that they may not be able to meet their respective needs. At this stage this scale of need has not been properly assessed or tested. Any future Hart Local Plan may therefore, need to be flexible to enable it to be adjusted to accommodate the potential eventuality of Hart having to accommodate a proportion of any unmet housing market area needs.

⁶ The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) identifies some overarching principles that are a distillation of the key elements that have made the new settlement model of development so successful, articulated for a 21st century context. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/ArtBGC.pdf>

7 ACTION

- 7.1 The recommendation is that a balanced approach is adopted to meet the Council's future housing needs. The proposal as set out in Appendix I reflects a recommended Preferred Approach to housing distribution for testing purposes only, but with a view that it will inform a full Publication Plan in the summer of 2015. It does not at this stage represent Council adopted policy and neither should it be read as the Council's final adopted approach to meeting housing needs.

Contact Details: Daniel Hawes, Planning Policy Manager / x 4120 / daniel.hawes@hart.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Housing Development Options Consultation Paper, August 2014

Sustainability Appraisal of Housing Development Options, August 2014

Summary of Consultation Response: Hart Local Plan Housing Development Options Consultation Paper (August 2014), November 2014

Recommended Preferred Housing Distribution Strategy, <u>subject to testing</u>:	
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
	4,000 dwellings