



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of an **INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION** will be held in First Floor 11 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **FRIDAY 14 JULY 2017 AT 9.10 AM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Couldrick', written in a cursive style.

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
Published on 6 July 2017

This meeting may be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

For consideration by

David Lee, Executive Member Strategic Planning and Highways

Officers Present

Clare Thurston, Specialist, Growth & Delivery

Arabella Yandle, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

IMD NO.	WARD	SUBJECT
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1. IMD
2017/22

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO THE RUSHMOOR BOROUGH
COUNCIL'S LOCAL PLAN 2032
(REGULATION 19)**

5 - 8

To provide a response to Rushmoor Borough Council on the consultation on the Local Plan 2032 Draft Submission.

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Agenda Item IMD22

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD 2017/22

TITLE	Wokingham Borough Council response to the consultation on Rushmoor Borough Council's Draft Submission Local Plan
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways, Councillor David Lee
ON	Friday 14 July 2017
TIME	09:10
WARD	Non-Specific
DIRECTOR	Interim Director for Environment, Josie Wragg

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That development proposed through the Rushmoor Borough Council Draft Submission Local Plan document has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

That Wokingham Borough Council submit an objection to the Rushmoor Borough Draft Submission Local Plan document on basis of:

- 1) Failure under the duty to cooperate to achieve the necessary cooperation on the strategic cross boundary matter of meeting housing needs.
- 2) Failure of the plan to consider the likely unmet need arising from elsewhere in the Housing Market Area.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Rushmoor Borough Council has published their Local Plan Draft Submission. The Draft Submission details the spatial strategy for Rushmoor, detailed policies and site allocations. This version of the plan is the final version prior to submission to the Inspectorate and includes all supporting documents and evidence studies.

The report outlines Wokingham Borough Council's concern regarding likely unmet housing need arising from Surrey Heath Borough Council, which has not been appropriately dealt with by Rushmoor Borough Council in their Local Plan Draft Submission. Rushmoor Borough is within the same Housing Market Area as Hart Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough and any consideration of unmet need should be met within that Housing Market Area.

Background

In June and July 2015 Rushmoor Borough Council (hereafter referred to as Rushmoor BC) consulted on their Local Plan Preferred Approach. This sought views on the options of policies and proposals in the draft plan and identified preferred options to take forward. At the time of consultation information on housing need was provided by the 2014 Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This found Rushmoor BC formed a Housing Market Area with Hart Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Councils. The contribution towards the wider housing need for Rushmoor BC was calculated to be 9,822 dwellings in the period 2011 to 2032.

The previous Preferred Approach included planning for 8,200 dwellings. This is a shortfall of 1,622 dwellings against the assessed need. In response to this consultation Wokingham Borough Council raised concerns that housing need should be fully met within the Housing Market Area (HMA).

In 2016, Rushmoor BC, Hart Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council publish a new assessment of housing need through the 2016 Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 – 2032. This identified a lower housing need from the previous study at 436 additional homes per year being the contribution for Rushmoor BC.

Rushmoor BC has now published for consultation their Draft Submission Local Plan between 9 June and 21 July 2017. This is a Regulation 19 consultation under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The plan includes an amended approach to housing development.

Analysis of Issues

It is evident that the three authorities of Rushmoor BC, Hart Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council are not planning to meet housing needs in full. Seeking positive opportunities to meet need is a central element of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Whilst supporting evidence published by Rushmoor BC states each authority will use their best endeavors to meet their individual housing needs, there appears to be a lack of joint consideration of opportunities and implications.

Unmet need is expected to arise from Surrey Heath Borough Council. This is evident from a letter from Surrey Heath Borough Council to Wokingham Borough Council in January 2017 asking whether we would be in a position to take some of Surrey Heath Borough's unmet housing need. The letter indicated that the unmet need is likely to be in the region of 1,700 dwellings. Wokingham Borough Council responses in February 2017 stating that housing need should be met with the HMA and that robust evidence would be required from across the whole HMA before unmet need could be considered.

The Rushmoor Local Plan Draft Submission includes a housing requirement that would result in Rushmoor BC providing 7,850 dwellings over the 2014-2032 plan period. This is sufficient to meet the contribution towards housing needs arising from

Rushmoor BC. Rushmoor BC has published an assessment of capacity that shows that this level of house building can be achieved and that there is some flexibility to allow for non-implementation and slower delivery. In total capacity for around 8,762 new homes has been identified.

Notwithstanding the Rushmoor Local Plan seeking to meet the housing needs arising from their authority’s areas, the plan does not consider the likelihood of unmet needs from elsewhere in the HMA, specifically Surrey Heath Borough Council. This is a major failing of the plan itself and in the outcome of engagement between the three authorities in the HMA.

Rushmoor BCs supporting Duty to Cooperate Statement states that Rushmoor BC is currently in the process of approaching HMA Partners with a proposed Memorandum of Understanding. This will set out that Rushmoor Borough Council has maximised opportunities to meet housing needs but they are not able to assist with any potential shortfall in meeting any unmet need within the HMA. Wokingham Borough Council does not consider this an appropriate outcome of Duty to Cooperate discussions at this stage in the local plan process. Further consideration is required as to how any unmet need from authorities in the HMA can be met within the HMA itself. This engagement should be positive in seeking solutions, taking into account the wider strategic position in local decisions.

Notwithstanding the above, Rushmoor BC should also be mindful of the White Paper “Fixing our broken housing market” (February 2017) which proposed a new standardised methodology for calculating housing needs. It will be necessary for Rushmoor BC and the other authorities within the HMA to reconsider the level of housing need in the near future.

In summary, while Rushmoor BC intend to meet the contribution to wider housing needs arising from their authority, the needs from the wider HMA are not addressed. In light of this it is not considered that the Duty to Cooperate has been complied with or that the plan is justified and effective; the result being that it is unsound. Rushmoor BC should work with Hart Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council to positively seek opportunities to meet development needs in full.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
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None anticipated

Cross-Council Implications

Decisions in Rushmoor BC regarding meeting housing needs, including unmet housing need across the HMA could lead to pressures to deliver housing elsewhere. This could affect the housing targets of other neighbouring local authorities, and potentially WBC.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES
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Director of Corporate Services	No response
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Monitoring Officer	No response
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Leader of the Council	No response
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List of Background Papers

Information published by Rushmoor Borough Council relating to the Draft Submission Local Plan– see http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/newlocalplan
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Contact Clare Thurston	Service Strategy & Commissioning (Place)
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Date 28 June 2017	Version No. 3
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