

# Agenda Item IMD34

## INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD: 2016/34

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation on the Green Belt Preferred Options for Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils' Local Plan</b>
<b>DECISION TO BE MADE BY</b>	Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration, Cllr Mark Ashwell
<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2016, 11am
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Interim Director of Environment, Josie Wragg
<b>REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON</b>	2 December 2016
<b>VENUE</b>	LGF1

### OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils' Local Plan has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Highways

- 1) approves the comments outlined in this report
- 2) approves that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation from Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils on their Green Belt Preferred Options

### SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report details the proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation on the Green Belt Preferred Options for the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan.

The content of this report includes the following:

- Considering the impact of Chiltern and South Bucks' Green Belt Preferred Options on Wokingham Borough.

## Background

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils are preparing a joint Local Plan covering the period up to 2036, for which both Councils will review planning policies and ‘seek to meet collective development needs’ (paragraph 1, page 1 of Green Belt Preferred Options Consultation Document).

The authorities carried out an Issues and Options consultation between January and March 2016. They aim to prepare a draft Local Plan for consultation in 2017.

The authorities state: ‘a key part of the Local Plan will be to explore options for meeting development needs in the Green Belt that cannot be met within built areas, on previously developed land nor can be met in areas outside of Chiltern and South Bucks’ (paragraph 4, page 1 of the Green Belt Preferred Options Consultation Document).

The authorities state that work on the Preferred Options is still ongoing, but it has been progressed sufficiently for it to be subject to public consultation. They also recognise the significant concerns that communities have about development within the Green Belt and this is another reason why they are undertaking a public consultation at this stage.

Chiltern and South Bucks are seeking comments on the Green Belt Preferred Options Consultation Document as well as Parts 1 and 2 of their Green Belt Assessment (Part 2 is still draft) and their Green Belt Development Options Appraisal.

## Analysis of Issues

### Housing Need

The evidence underpinning the housing requirement within a local plan must be based upon full objectively assessed need (OAN) as stated in paragraph 159 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should:

*“Use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework.”*

The Objectively Assessed Need is calculated at a geographical scale called the Housing Market Area, which is defined by considering factors such as migration and commuting patterns and house prices and change of rate in house prices. There is a divergence in view of which Housing Market Area South Bucks District sits within. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment demonstrates that South Bucks is in the Eastern Berkshire plus South Bucks Housing Market Area, which consists of Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead and South Buckinghamshire District Council. This is in comparison to evidence produced by South Bucks and Chiltern District Council which concludes that the ‘best fit’ for the joint local plan area is within the Central Buckinghamshire HMA.

It is understood that there have been discussions under the Duty-to-Cooperate to explore the potential for Aylesbury Vale to take Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils estimated unmet housing need of 5,800 dwellings. Wokingham Borough

Council would like to understand further how Chiltern and South Bucks District Council are seeking to work collaboratively with those authorities in the Eastern Berkshire HMA and any potential unmet need that may arise from the Eastern Berkshire HMA. This may have implications for Wokingham Borough and the Western Berkshire HMA if the remaining authorities of Slough and RBWM in the Eastern Berkshire HMA are unable to meet their housing need.

### Green Belt

Chiltern and South Bucks have undertaken a Green Belt Assessment (Part 1 published March 2016) to identify whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of land from the Green Belt to help contribute towards meeting development needs of the authorities, or whether such changes would significantly harm the functionality of the Green Belt.

Part 2 of the Green Belt Assessment is in draft form at present (published October 2016). Part 2 provides a detailed assessment of the options identified in Part 1 of the Green Belt Assessment and it will be completed following this current consultation, in order to take into account public and stakeholder opinion.

Chiltern and South Bucks have also completed a Green Belt Development Options Appraisal document (published October 2016), which takes into account the content of the Green Belt Assessments (to date) as well as other technical pieces of evidence such as the Sustainability Appraisal, infrastructure needs, the impact on the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Issues and Options consultation responses. The conclusions of the Green Belt Development Options Appraisal document have been brought forward into the Green Belt Preferred Options consultation document.

In response to the findings of Parts 1 and 2 of the Green Belt Assessment and the Green Belt Development Options Appraisal, a total of fifteen sites have been included in the Green Belt Preferred Options consultation document for potential removal from the Green Belt. Given that neither of the districts of Chiltern or South Bucks share an administrative boundary with Wokingham Borough Council, it is not considered necessary to comment on the suitability of the fifteen sites because their release would have little impact upon Wokingham Borough in terms of migration or infrastructure given the substantial distances involved. It is considered that the Chilterns and South Bucks are best placed to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist to warrant the removal of these specific sites from the Green Belt.

### Conclusion

Whilst the Council still has concerns about the Objectively Assessed Need figure that Chiltern and South Bucks District Council are using to underpin their joint local plan, it is not considered necessary to comment on the suitability of the fifteen sites put forward in this consultation document. This is because neither of the districts of Chiltern or South Bucks share an administrative boundary with Wokingham Borough and therefore the release of the fifteen sites would have little impact upon Wokingham Borough in terms of migration or infrastructure given the substantial distances involved.

## 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

None

### Cross-Council Implications

N/A

### SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

<b>Director – Finance and Resources</b>	No comments received
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	No comments received
<b>Leader of the Council</b>	No comments received

### List of Background Papers

Green Belt Preferred Options Consultation document (Oct – Dec 2016):

<http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/planning/localplan2014-2036>

Draft Green Belt Assessment Part 2 (October 2016) and Green Belt Options Appraisal (October 2016) both found under the heading 'Green Belt' on the Evidence Base webpage:

<http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/planning/localplan2014-2036/evidence>

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<b>Date</b> 14/11/2016	<b>Version No.</b> 1