

Agenda Item IMD17

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD: 2017/17

TITLE	Wokingham Borough Council response to the consultation on Hart District Council's Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways, Councillor David Lee
ON	10 July 2017
TIME	11am
WARD	Non-Specific
DIRECTOR	Interim Director for Environment, Josie Wragg

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That development proposed through the Hart District Council Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites document has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

Wokingham Borough Council submit a holding objection to the Hart District Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites document on basis that:

- 1) In accordance with the duty co-operate, it has been confirmed that not all reasonable measures have been taken to demonstrate that all unmet housing need is consumed across its own Housing Market Area (HMA), and
- 2) A robust Duty to Co-operate process must be undertaken with Wokingham Borough Council, to consider the strategic infrastructure requirements and infrastructure delivery implications of the proposed housing site allocations at Eversley, Yateley and Land Adjacent to Risely will have upon Wokingham Borough.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Hart District Council has published their Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites. The Draft Local Plan details the draft policies and spatial vision for Hart District.

The report outlines Wokingham Borough Council's concern regarding likely unmet housing need arising from Surrey Heath Borough Council, which has not yet been taken into consideration by Hart District Council in their Draft Local Plan. Hart District is within the same Housing Market Area as Surrey Heath Borough, and any consideration of unmet need must first be met within the relevant Housing Market Area.

Four proposed housing site allocations in the Hart District Council Draft Local Plan are

within close proximity to the Wokingham Borough boundary. Wokingham Borough Council therefore welcome the opportunity to discuss further any cross-boundary strategic issues such as education, transport and flood risk associated with development at these locations so that the most appropriate, sustainable and deliverable solutions can be identified.

Background

Hart District Council has published for consultation their Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites between 26 April to 9 June 2017. This is a Regulation 18 consultation under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Draft Local Plan sets out the long term vision for the District, up until 2032 and includes proposed development management policies and proposed site allocations. Hart District is within a Housing Market Area (HMA) with Rushmoor Borough and Surrey Heath Borough. All three authorities are working together to ensure that the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) of the whole HMA is delivered. Hart District is a neighbouring local authority and the proposed Draft Local Plan includes proposed site allocations which will have cross boundary strategic implications.

This report has been sent as a holding response subject to official sign off.

Analysis of Issues

Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN)

Hart District Council state in their Draft Local Plan that both Surrey Heath and Rushmoor District Council will use their best endeavors to meet their individual housing needs. However, Wokingham Borough Council received a letter in January 2017 from Surrey Heath Borough Council, which asked whether we would be in a position to take some of Surrey Heath Borough's unmet housing need, in the likelihood that a shortfall arises. Initial indications from them were that this shortfall is likely to be in the region of 1,700 dwellings. Wokingham Borough Council sent a response to the letter on 6 February 2017 stating that identified Objectively Assessed housing Need should be met with the relevant Housing Market Area (HMA) which in this case comprises of Hart District, Surrey Heath Borough and Rushmoor Borough. Our response also stated that we would require robust evidence from across the Hart, Surrey Heath and Rushmoor HMA before we could consider the possibility of whether there is a need for or whether we have the suitable capacity to accommodate any unmet need arising from elsewhere. The Council's current view on this matter remains the same.

It is noted within the Hart District Draft Local Plan, that the authority has added an uplift on top of their OAHN in order to help meet their priority need for subsidised affordable rented homes. However, the proposed housing requirement figure does not currently take into consideration any unmet need from their wider HMA, including the perceived shortfall likely from Surrey Heath Borough.

Wokingham Borough Council acknowledges that the Hart District Council's Draft Local Plan says that should Hart be required to take any more housing, under the Duty to Cooperate they will carry out a review of the plan in the form of a separate Development Plan Document for that part of the unmet housing need to be accommodated within Hart District. The delay that this exercise could cause would add pressure for housing outside the Hart, Surrey Heath and Rushmoor HMA and as it is known that there is likely to be pressured (of around 1700 dwellings) from Surrey Heath Borough Council it is considered that this matter should be addressed now as a Duty to Co-operate exercise, even if the outcome is a package of reserve sites/site to cover off this eventuality.

Notwithstanding what we know from the above, the proposed Draft Local Plan demonstrates that Hart District Council will meet its entire proposed housing requirement of 10,185 over the 2011-2032 plan period. When taking into consideration the amount of new homes built and new homes given permission at 31 January 2017 and a windfall allowance on small sites, there are 4,591 new homes left to be planned for in the Draft Local Plan. The Strategic Allocated Sites account for 3,720 dwellings and the allocated extensions to smaller settlements account for 611 dwellings. This altogether leaves 260 dwellings to be delivered in order to meet the housing requirement, which the Draft Local Plan states will be delivered through Rural Exceptions Sites and previously developed land sites.

It is suggested that further allocations (or evidence of resolved discussions with their partners in their HMA) are provided to address the Duty to Co-operate.

Hart DC should also be mindful of the proposed standardised Objectively Assessed Need methodology within the Housing White Paper which was published in February 2017. Hart DC may need to reconsider the level of housing need that may arise when conducting the standardised objectively assessed housing need assessment.

Proposed Housing Site Allocations

Hart have allocated four sites that either border Wokingham Borough boundary or are within close proximity to the Wokingham Borough boundary. The four proposed site allocations that are in close proximity to the Wokingham Borough boundary are Eversley (124 dwellings proposed), Yateley (88 dwellings proposed) and Land adjacent to Riseley (83 dwellings proposed). Altogether, these sites will provide for 295 dwellings out of the 611 dwellings that will be provided by the extensions to smaller settlements (Policy SC5). The site allocations for Eversley, Yateley and land adjacent to Riseley adjacent to the A33 would inter alia generate education, transport and flood risk impacts on Wokingham Borough. In particular the 'village extension' to a village not within Hart DC (Riseley) should be given special consideration in the context of any Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the impacts to be mitigated upon Wokingham Borough Council in the Development Management Policies.

It is worth noting that Wokingham Borough Council, which lies within the Western Housing Market Area (comprising West Berks; Bracknell; Reading) have produced a non-statutory spatial framework, which identifies an opportunity area at Grazeley. However, this would need to be confirmed through the plan making process.

Therefore Wokingham Borough Council requests that Hart District Council undertakes a robust Duty to Cooperate process, considering the strategic implications that the proposed housing site allocations at Eversley, Yateley and Land Adjacent to Risely will have upon Wokingham Borough.

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 anticipated

Cross-Council Implications

Decisions in Hart District on the location of sites for residential and other types of development could affect how the authority needs to resolve impacts on services such as transport, education, etc. within the borough.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Director of Corporate Services	No Comment
Monitoring Officer	No Comment
Leader of the Council	No Comment

List of Background Papers

Information published by Hart District Council relating to the Draft Local Plan: Strategy and Sites– see <https://www.hart.gov.uk/draft-local-plan>

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