

Agenda Item IMD22

NOTICE OF INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

ITEM NO.	IMD 2015/22
TITLE	Council's response to the Consultation by Rushmoor Borough Council on their Local Plan Preferred Options
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Councillor John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways
DATE AND TIME OF DECISION	Friday 17 July 2015 at 10:45am
VENUE	2 nd Floor landing meeting room at Shute End
REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON	Friday 10 July 2015

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION
REFERENCE IMD: 2015/22

TITLE	Council's Response to the Consultation by Rushmoor Borough Council on their Local Plan Preferred Options
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Councillor John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways
ON	Friday 17 July 2015
TIME	10:45am
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director for the Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That the final Rushmoor Borough 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; and
- 2) that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation from Rushmoor Borough Council on their Local Plan Preferred Options.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The document from Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) details their how they envisage meeting the need for both market and affordable housing over the period 2011 to 2032. The document also details Rushmoor Borough's strategy for commercial and other development, including that associated with Farnborough Airport. Rushmoor Borough is consulting upon their document from 8 June until 20 July 2015.

This report details the proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation from the Rushmoor Borough Council which details how any potential harmful impacts of the emerging Local Plan upon the authority are minimised.

Background

In November 2014, Rushmoor Borough Council sought views on a range of potential inter-authority issues (housing, employment, transport) which they considered might need to be reviewed and addressed through their then forthcoming Local Plan. In April 2015 the Council responded to this request as detailed in the analysis of issues section.

As Rushmoor Borough is a member of the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (alongside the Council and another 9 local authorities) and is with the housing market area adjoining Wokingham Borough (with Hart District and Surrey Heath Borough), it is appropriate to respond to the consultation as the implementation of their strategy could affect the borough.

Taking account of the comments received on potential inter-authority issues together with the research Rushmoor Borough Council on these and other matters, they have produced the Preferred Option for their Local Plan. This outlines how Rushmoor Borough Council is likely to address development and issues associated with these inter-authority issues and other matters including housing, employment, shopping, gypsies & travellers, proposals at Farnborough airport, open space & recreation and protection of the environment. Once agreed, the final Rushmoor Local Plan will replace their Core Strategy (adopted 6 October 2011) which current sets the approach for development in the authority from 2006 to 2027.

Analysis of Issues

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the three authorities of Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath (December 2014) details the housing needs for each of them. Although this assessment indicates that Rushmoor should deliver around 9,822 homes between 2011 and 2032 (470 pa), the Preferred Options document indicates that they envisage delivering 8,200 homes (390 pa). The information published by Rushmoor Borough Council indicates how they consider that their preferred approach is consistent with the strategy of their Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – Enterprise M3. Rushmoor Borough Council has approached Hart and Surrey Heath Councils to establish whether they can address the likely shortfall of around 80 dwellings annually as part of their own approaches (their needs are 370 and 340 dwellings per annum respectively) to meeting housing need.

Pending preparation of Local Plans by Hart and Surrey Heath Councils to accommodate their identified needs in their Housing Market Assessment, Wokingham Council considers it premature for it to look to addressing any shortfall outside of their joint Housing Market Area. The Council therefore does not consider that it is appropriate to assessing whether areas outside of the joint Housing Market Area such as Wokingham Borough could accommodate some of the identified shortfall currently identified by Rushmoor Borough (80 dwellings annually).

The preferred options document details the likely approach of Rushmoor to employment, shopping, gypsy & travellers, proposals at Farnborough airport, open space & recreation and protection of the environment. With the exception of any approach to continuing protection of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, due to the distance between Rushmoor and Wokingham Boroughs (5.6km at closest) it is unlikely that any proposals for these uses are likely to affect the borough. This view is reinforced by the research of Rushmoor Borough indicating that commuting and

migration patterns indicate greater movements between that authority and Guildford, Hart and Surrey Heath.

With respect of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), although it is noted that Rushmoor Borough Council are looking to continue the approach advocated by the work of the Joint Strategic Partnership Board, they acknowledged that their planned delivery of 8,200 homes is dependent upon their delivery of sufficient avoidance measures, especially SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace). Delivery of the avoidance measures (comprising SANG and SAMM – pan-SPA Strategic Access Management & Monitoring) are essential to ensure that the breeding success of the birds nesting upon the SPA is not adversely affected by increases in population from additional housing. With respect to SANG, Rushmoor Borough Council indicate that they are interested in accessing SANG capacity within other authorities, including Wokingham Borough as this will ensure that they can deliver the housing growth they envisage to support their areas’ economy.

To assess if Wokingham Borough Council could share SANG capacity (if available) which could enable Rushmoor Borough to meet its envisaged housing target of 8,200 homes, Wokingham Borough needs to understand the potential requirement for homes within its own area. This will be known once we have the outcome of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment currently being undertaken for all the Berkshire authorities and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership to assess housing need from 2013 until 2036. The results of this are expected in the summer. Once the Council is aware of the need for homes through to 2036 it can then start assessing how much SANG might be required in the borough to meet this. Therefore, the authority cannot currently state whether there is any potential to share SANG capacity with Rushmoor Borough at this time.

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)	None	Yes	N/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	None	Yes	N/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	None	Yes	N/a

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The budget is based on what we know at this point of time. Further issues, including any arising from future versions of Rushmoor Borough’s Local Plan, could have financial implications. As explained below the potential sharing of SANG capacity with Rushmoor Borough could generate income for the authority.

Cross-Council Implications

The potential sharing of SANG capacity with Rushmoor Borough could generate income for the authority, although this can only be determined once the potential requirement for this to meet future development in the borough is known.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Director - Resources	No response received
Monitoring Officer	No response received
Leader of the Council	I fully support the officers recommendations (18/6/15)

List of Background Papers

Consultation documents from Rushmoor Borough Council on the Preferred Options consultation for their Local Plan – see <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/newlocalplan>.

Contact Graham Ritchie	Service Development Planning & Policy
Telephone No (0118) 974 6457	Email graham.ritchie@wokingham.gov.uk
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