

**TO: THE EXECUTIVE**  
**16 FEBRUARY 2010**

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**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - SITE ALLOCATIONS CONSULTATION**  
**Director of Environment, Culture and Communities**

**1 PURPOSE OF DECISION**

- 1.1 The Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD) will identify sites to meet the Borough's development needs to 2026 and beyond. This report seeks approval for the format of the proposed public consultation on the SADPD.

**2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **That Executive endorse the proposed consultation approach and the accompanying consultation document.**
- 2.2 **That minor changes to the consultation document be agreed with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport and Economic Development in consultation with the Chief Officer Planning and Transport.**

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The SADPD is an important element in securing delivery of the vision set out in the Council's adopted Core Strategy and ensuring that we meet our obligations to secure a robust and flexible supply of land to meet the Borough's future development requirements.
- 3.2 It is important that the local community and other stakeholders are properly engaged in the process of identifying locations for the Borough's future development. Production of the SADPD will also help the achievement of the Council's medium-term objective 3 - 'To promote sustainable housing and infrastructure development' which includes 'producing a Local Development Framework that protects the Green Belt and balances the demand for new housing with the need to protect the wider environment'.

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement under the planning regulations to carry out proper consultation on Development Plan Documents. There is an option of delaying production of the SADPD. This was considered by the Executive and Officers, particularly in light of indications that a Conservative Government would abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. However, in the absence of clarity on what would replace RSSs and the desire to maintain effective control over future development, it was agreed with the Executive that the Council should continue to plan for the quantum of development set out in the South East Plan to ensure that we are planning for change and not reacting to it.
- 4.2 The option of not identifying sites for future development would leave the Council vulnerable to the pattern of development in the Borough being led by developers and

land owners through planning applications and potentially costly planning appeals rather than through the plan-led system that forms the basis of the government's approach to planning.

## **5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### The Role of the SADPD

- 5.1 The SADPD will implement the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Bracknell Forest Core Strategy by identifying sites required to meet the Borough's future development needs, including meeting the housing allocations set in the South East Plan. In addition to housing it will also identify appropriate sites for employment use and set out infrastructure requirements to mitigate the impact of the planned new development. The SADPD will include reviews of a number of planning designations on the Proposals Map, namely:
- Settlement Boundaries
  - Town, District and Local Centre Boundaries
  - Employment Area Boundaries
- 5.2 It will also review the status of education sites in light of the need to provide additional school places over the plan period, and allocate sites to meet the housing needs of the travelling population.
- 5.3 To ensure that appropriate infrastructure provision is made for the planned levels of development, taking account of the infrastructure providers' existing investment plans an Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being prepared in conjunction with the SADPD. The Infrastructure Plan will identify current and planned infrastructure provision and an assessment of the requirements arising from the projected development. Gaps in existing and planned infrastructure will be identified and an assessment made of the timing and cost of additional infrastructure required, along with the identification of potential funding sources.

### The Consultation Document

- 5.4 It is proposed to produce one main document setting out the context for the site allocations. We will endeavour to make this user-friendly for all audiences, not just those familiar with the process and planning jargon. It will be structured as follows:
1. Overview  
This would explain the scope of the Site Allocations DPD, the period it covers and give an indication of the scale of development that needs to be accommodated. It would also set out the role of the document within the Local Development Framework and in the context of national and regional guidance.
  2. Our Vision  
This section would explain how the Council has already adopted a long-term planning strategy for the Borough and that this is based on a shared vision, linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy.
  3. Locational Principles and Constraints

In order to give a clear indication of the constraints affecting significant areas of the Borough it is proposed to include a simple map showing

- The Special Protection Area (SPA) and the 400m zone.
- Green Belt
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Flood Zones 2 and 3
- Crown Estate
- Existing settlement boundaries
- Key transport routes

#### 4. Development Needs

This section would provide an indication of the main issues relating to different uses and other requirements. Apart from general housing this would include employment, retail, gypsy and traveller accommodation and needs for community facilities and infrastructure. Options for the provision of development apart from the main housing requirement will be included in this section. It will also set out some of the broad infrastructure requirements associated with the planned level of development for such things as additional school places, open space, SPA mitigation land, sports and social facilities.

#### 5. Locations for Housing Development

In order to give people an indication of the potential of the areas according to the sequence of search, reference would be made to the capacity and potential sites within the town centre and to previously developed and other land within the defined settlements. This would include potential for the change of use of employment land and any potential opportunities to provide additional dwellings through the regeneration of existing residential areas. A short explanation will be given about why it is not considered necessary or appropriate to look at possible locations within the Green Belt, at this stage. It is intended to include a further map showing in broad terms the clusters of sites that have been identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and other sources as potential broad areas for development.

#### 6. Initial SA of Clusters

In order to give a clear and impression of the issues around the identified clusters a table will be included showing their pros and cons resulting from the of the sustainability assessment.

#### 7. Profiles of Broad Areas

A profile of each major development location will be provided containing basic information such as estimated site area, capacity, physical characteristics and any known constraints or issues affecting its future development potential. We will also include, as far as possible, any early indications of infrastructure required to support the development of the identified locations.

#### 8. Your Involvement in the Process

This section will provide information on the consultation in terms of how to make comments, details of exhibitions and what will happen following the consultation and further opportunities to be involved.

- 5.5 A copy of the Draft Consultation Document is attached at Appendix A (via weblink) and a copy of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is attached at Appendix B (via weblink).

### Consultation Methods

- 5.5 It is intended to use our specialist software to enable consultation responses to be made on-line. Copies of the consultation material and response forms will be made available at public libraries and Council offices and the locations of these will be publicised.
- 5.6 Pro-active engagement with key local organisations will be facilitated through the use of the Local Strategic Partnership workshop in March to discuss potential development locations. It is also proposed to hold public exhibitions of the consultation material, some of which would be staffed by planning officers. The following venues are proposed for the exhibition:

<b>Venue</b>
<b>Binfield Parish Office (hall at back)</b>
<b>Sandhurst Library</b>
<b>Bracknell Town Council Office</b>
<b>Crowthorne Parish Office (foyer)</b>
<b>Binfield Library</b>
<b>Sandhurst Town Council</b>
<b>Binfield Memorial Hall</b>
<b>Warfield Parish Council Foyer</b>
<b>Foyer Sainsburys, Princess Square</b>
<b>Winkfield Parish Office</b>
<b>Crowthorne Baptist Church (foyer), High St.</b>
<b>Martins Heron, Tesco</b>
<b>Newell Green, Brownlow Hall</b>

- 5.7 Up to the publication of the draft SADPD programmed for October 2010, the Council will be engaged in a process of informal consultation (Regulation 25 Consultation). This means that there will be further opportunities to engage with affected parties later in the process as further information becomes available and proposals for the potential development sites are worked up in more detail. This is likely to take the form of more focused meetings and workshops, but this early stage is considered important to seek views from a wide range of people and bodies on the initial options being considered.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Consultation on the Site Allocations DPD is required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended in 2008). The provisions relating to the early consultation are covered by Regulation 25 and it is considered that undertaking the consultation as proposed will help fulfill the Council's obligations under this legislation.

### Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 Funding for the work on the Site Allocations DPD, including the consultation proposed in this report will be funded from the existing LDF Budget Allocation with staff funded from within the existing Planning Policy Budget.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The allocation of land for different uses which is the key function of the SADPD has the potential to advantage some groups at the expense of others. Carrying out full and effective consultation on its proposals is therefore an important part of ensuring that no equalities groups are unfairly disadvantaged. An important part of the SADPD will be to ensure that new development contributes to the achievement of sustainable communities which have good access to a wide range of facilities including employment, education, health facilities, open space and community facilities (community halls, places of worship etc). In this respect the SADPD should have a positive role in reducing inequalities in the Borough.
- 6.4 A Full Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Spatial Policy Section which covers the relevant issues in more detail and is attached at Appendix C.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 Strategic Risk Register - No 4 identifies the risks arising from the increased housing allocations and the implied 'jobs allocations' in the final version of the South East Plan. A particular trigger for this risk is identified as houses being built without accompanying improvements in infrastructure
- 6.6 The potential adverse consequences are identified as:
- Demands on services increase;
  - Infrastructure is put under pressure;
  - Transport system under pressure;
  - Area becomes less attractive to employers;
  - Risk of unemployment;
  - Area becomes less attractive place to live;.
  - Residents complain; and,
  - Image of Council damaged

- 6.7 Production of the SADPD and accompanying Infrastructure Plan should help to reduce this risk by:
- Reducing the risk of unplanned development being permitted on appeal
  - Identifying as far as possible the infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of new development and sources of funding
  - Ensuring that sustainable locations are chosen for future development that will preserve and enhance quality of life in the Borough
  - Ensuring stakeholders are aware of, and properly engaged in, the planning of future development.

## 7 CONSULTATION

### Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Parish Councils, National Bodies, Local development Interests and other specialist interest groups.

### Method of Consultation

- 7.2 A workshop was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 at Easthampstead Park to consider the priorities for allocating sites within the Borough.

### Representations Received

- 7.3.1 The results of this workshop were written up and posted on the Council website. Some of the main findings are summarised in the table below which sets out the three most important considerations under the three Sustainability Appraisal headings of Social, Economic and Environmental.

<b>Social:</b>
1. Seek locations and a scale of development that would deliver a range of <b>new</b> on site infrastructure.
2. Meeting the organic growth in existing settlements to allow people to stay close to family and in settlements where they have grown up.
3. Seek locations that would facilitate improvements to, or better use of <b>existing</b> infrastructure.
<b>Economic:</b>
1. Seek locations that are already well served by sustainable means of transport.
2. Seek locations that are conveniently located to existing concentrations of employment
3. Seek locations and a scale of development that include land suitable for the provision of small scale employment floorspace.
<b>Environmental:</b>

1. Seek locations that ensure the most effective and efficient use of land.
2. Seek locations and a scale of development that will increase the use of sustainable modes of transport.
3. Seek locations that do not prejudice local distinctiveness of townscape.

#### Background Papers

Appendix A – Draft Consultation Document

Appendix B – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

#### Contact for further information

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#### Doc. Ref

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