



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

TOPIC – Response to consultations on the draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

Eastleigh Borough Council is consulting on a draft of its Local Plan; the consultation period extends to the 3rd January 2012. The draft Local Plan now combines the work previously undertaken by the Borough in preparing their Core Strategy and the proposed Sites and Development Management Policies DPD. The results of this round of consultations will guide the preparation of a pre-submission draft of the Local Plan for formal consultation in the middle of 2012, prior to submission to the Secretary of State in the autumn. The expectation is that Eastleigh will adopt the Plan by the end of 2013.

The draft Local Plan covers the period 2011-2029 and requires that 9,400 new dwellings be provided in the Borough by 2029. In reaching this figure Eastleigh started with the South East Plan target for their Borough of 7080 new dwellings by 2026, and calculated that all the PUSH authorities which did not have an adopted Core Strategy as at the 31st March 2011 would each need to identify land for an additional 4,811 dwellings, to make up the potential shortfalls from elsewhere in the PUSH area, making a total requirement of 11,891 new dwellings for the Borough. As Eastleigh had completed 2470 dwellings between 2006 and 2011, this leaves a requirement of 9421 new dwellings over their plan period.

A further assumption made by Eastleigh in assessing their housing requirements is that their share of the 6,000 new dwellings proposed in the Strategic Development Area north/north east of Hedge End would have been 4,500 houses, which in turn implies that Winchester were required to provide the remaining 1,500 dwellings.

Three sites have been identified near to the Winchester District to meet the housing requirements. However, Eastleigh has made the development of these sites, which would provide 2,700 houses out of the total requirement of 9,400, conditional on the construction of the Botley bypass. While the City Council has previously supported the principle of a Botley bypass (and reserves the route of it in its 2006 Local Plan), the case for the new road and a viable means of funding it has yet to be produced.

While it is ultimately for Eastleigh to demonstrate the soundness of this approach, the City Council should make it clear that it questions the basis for calculating the Eastleigh housing requirements and the implication that this may have any wider validity outside of Eastleigh Borough, particularly the implication that the PUSH authorities which have not adopted their Core Strategies are solely responsible for making up any shortfall in the sub-regional housing requirements.

Furthermore it is recommended that the City Council disagrees with the suggestion in the document that Eastleigh were only required to develop 4,500 of the 6,000 houses proposed in the Strategic Development Area north/north east of Hedge End, and by implication that Winchester was responsible for developing the remaining 1,500 dwellings.

DECISION

That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement raises no objections to the draft Eastleigh local Plan at this stage but formally writes to Eastleigh Borough Council setting out the City Council's concerns in respect of how the housing requirements have been calculated insofar as they seek to pre-judge housing provision in the PUSH area and affect the Winchester District. See appendix 1 for draft comments.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Eastleigh Borough Council is currently consulting on a draft of its Local Plan, the consultation period extends to the 3rd January 2012. The draft Local Plan now combines the work previously undertaken by the Borough in preparing their Core Strategy and the proposed Sites and Policies DPD. It therefore includes the Borough's preferred strategy for new development, detailed site allocations and designations, together with development management policies. The intention is that the results of this round of consultations will inform the preparation of a pre-submission draft of the Local Plan for formal consultation in the middle of 2012, prior to submission to the Secretary of State in the autumn. The expectation is that Eastleigh will adopt the Plan by the end of 2013.

As would be expected, the Plan is a lengthy and detailed document, which covers the whole Borough. The majority of the policies and proposals are therefore of little concern to this Council, however there are two areas which do raise concerns.

Although the South East Plan is still for the time being part of the development plan and the Eastleigh Local Plan should be in general conformity with it, by the time the Borough submits their plan to the Secretary of State, all regional spatial strategies are expected to have been revoked. However, Eastleigh is using the South East Plan requirements as its starting point; this requires 7080 new dwellings by 2026 (excluding the North/North-East of Hedge End Strategic Development Area). The Borough examined a number of scenarios to calculate their housing requirement up to 2029. Their preferred approach is to unilaterally reapportion the revised sub-regional housing requirement, which emerged from the DTZ refresh of the PUSH economic strategy. It is unclear how they have reached their conclusions not least because the PUSH strategy currently runs until 2026, and the task of re-apportioning any potential shortfall (even only to 2026) is yet to be completed. Nonetheless Eastleigh has calculated that all the PUSH authorities which have not yet adopted a Core Strategy will need to take an additional 4,811 dwellings, which in Eastleigh's case makes a total requirement of 11,891 dwellings between 2006-2029. Given that Eastleigh already completed 2470 dwellings between 2006 and 2011 this leaves a balance of 9421 dwellings to be allocated over their plan period (which has been rounded to 9,400).

The City Council should not endorse any assumption that all the local planning authorities which have yet to adopt a Core Strategy should provide for an additional 4,811 additional dwellings in their Local Plans. There is no reason why any re-apportionment should solely fall on those authorities yet to adopt a Core Strategy. All DPDs should have a degree of flexibility built in to meet any future increased housing requirements, and it is open to Local Planning authorities to review settlement boundaries, employment land requirements, and housing densities as a means of increasing housing supply, all of which could be undertaken outside of a review of their Core Strategies.

There is currently a process in hand to allow the PUSH authorities to consider how to apportion the sub-regional housing requirements, and it would be wrong to pre-empt the outcome of this process in such an arbitrary way. While it is understood that Eastleigh would wish to progress their Local Plan, and that it will ultimately be for the Borough Council to justify the soundness of the approach it has adopted, it should be made clear that the method used to calculate the housing requirement is not one that has been agreed by the other PUSH authorities and would not necessarily be one which they would wish to adopt in calculating their own housing requirements.

A further assumption made by Eastleigh in considering the options (although it would seem that the Borough ultimately rejected this as its preferred option as it resulted in a higher housing requirement for the Borough), is that its share of the 6,000 new dwellings proposed in the Strategic Development Area north/north east of Hedge End would have been 4,500 houses, which in turn implies that Winchester would have provided to the remaining 1,500 dwellings.

The joint working that was undertaken on the SDA with Eastleigh Borough Council was on the basis that the South East Plan required an SDA in this particular location and mentioned that some of the SDA could be within Winchester District. Further detailed work would establish the most suitable areas for development, but it has never been the case that Winchester's 'share' of the SDA has been established. The technical work which would have defined the SDA site boundaries and developable areas, taking into account the visual and environmental constraints in the broad area of search, was never completed. The capacity studies undertaken by PUSH, which were completed, show that land in Winchester District is generally more sensitive, so it cannot be assumed that any of the SDA would have been in Winchester. Now that Eastleigh has resolved not to take forward the requirements of the South East Plan to plan for the SDA there is no case for Winchester to take forward any part of the SDA proposal alone, or for meeting any of the SDA requirement in an isolated and sensitive location within Winchester District.

Furthermore, while Winchester had always stated that it was prepared to work closely with Eastleigh to bring forward the plans for the SDA, it never agreed to a specific allocation of housing within the District, and this should be made explicit in the way Eastleigh has calculated its own housing requirement.

A number of sites have been identified by Eastleigh Borough Council to meet the above housing targets, three of which are of particular interest to the Council. These are the sites north and east of Boorley Green on the site of Botley Park country club, hotel and golf course, which is proposed for 1,400 dwellings; a smaller site north-east of Botley, for 300 dwellings, both of which adjoin the District boundary; and a further allocation to the east of Hedge End of 1,000 dwellings.

Draft Policy BO3 provides for a new Botley bypass, and identifies an indicative route, the majority of which is in Eastleigh. However to complete the road land in the Winchester District would be required, and this land is currently safeguarded in a saved policy of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan. If there is a continued need for the bypass and it can be demonstrated that such a scheme is deliverable, the City Council should continue its support for the proposal. However it should be noted that at this stage the transport case has still to be made for the road, and sufficient sources funding to complete the route have yet to be identified. Nonetheless Eastleigh has made the development of the above three housing sites conditional on the construction of the bypass (policy S7) and there is a concern that the site selection process appears to favour sites which could contribute to the need for, or funding of, the bypass. These three sites combined account for around 29% of the Borough's total housing requirement, and there would not appear to be any contingency to provide alternative sites should the bypass not come forward for any reason. It should therefore be made clear that Eastleigh should make up any shortfall in housing numbers consequent upon the bypass not being constructed, and would not look to re-apportion it to any of the other PUSH partners.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

Consultation on draft report with CMT, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement.

**FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION
NOTICE**

n/a

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR
OFFICER CONSULTED**

n/a

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 30.12.11

Councillor Humby – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement

APPENDIX 1: DRAFT COMMENTS

Winchester City Council would not wish to formally object to the draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, but would raise the following comments in respect of how the housing requirements have been calculated insofar as they seek to pre-judge housing provision in the PUSH area and affect the Winchester District.

Firstly, there is no justification for the assumption made in establishing the Borough's housing requirement that only 4,500 houses out of the 6,000 of new dwellings proposed in the Strategic Development Area north/north east of Hedge End would have been provided within Eastleigh; which in turn implies that Winchester would have been required to provide the remaining 1,500 dwellings.

The joint working that was undertaken on the SDA with Eastleigh Borough Council was on the basis that the South East Plan required an SDA in this particular location and mentioned that some of the SDA could be within Winchester District. Further detailed work would establish the most suitable areas for development, but it has never been the case that Winchester's 'share' of the SDA has been established. The technical work which would have defined the SDA site boundaries and developable areas, taking into account the visual and environmental constraints in the broad area of search, was never completed. The capacity studies undertaken by PUSH, which were completed, show that land in Winchester District is generally more sensitive, so it cannot be assumed that any of the SDA would have been in Winchester. Now that Eastleigh has resolved not to take forward the requirements of the South East Plan to plan for the SDA there is no case for Winchester to take forward any part of the SDA proposal alone, or for meeting any of the SDA requirement in an isolated and sensitive location within Winchester District.

Furthermore, while Winchester City Council had always stated that it was prepared to work closely with Eastleigh to bring forward the plans for the SDA, it was never asked to agree to a specific allocation of housing within the District, and this should be made explicit in the way Eastleigh has calculated its own housing requirement.

It is noted that a number of sites have been identified by the Borough Council to meet the housing targets, three of which are of particular interest to this Council. These are the sites north and east of Boorley Green on the site of the Botley Park country club, hotel and golf course, which is proposed for 1,400 dwellings; a smaller site north-east of Botley, for 300 dwellings, both of which adjoin the District boundary; and a further allocation to the east of Hedge End of 1,000 dwellings.

Draft Policy BO3 provides for a new Botley bypass, and identifies an indicative route, the majority of which is in Eastleigh. However to complete the road land in the Winchester District would be required and this land is currently safeguarded in a saved policy of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan. If there is a continued need for the bypass and it can be demonstrated that such a scheme is deliverable, the City Council would continue its support for the proposal. However it should be noted that at this stage the transport case has still to be made for the road, and sufficient sources funding to complete the route have yet to be identified.

Nonetheless it is noted that the development of the above three housing sites is conditional on the construction of the bypass (policy S7) and there is a concern that the site selection process appears to favour sites which could contribute to the need for, or funding of, the bypass. These three sites combined account for around 29% of the Borough's total housing requirement, and there would not appear to be any contingency to provide alternative sites should the bypass not come forward for any reason. It should therefore be made explicit in the Local Plan that Eastleigh would make up any shortfall in housing numbers consequent upon the bypass not being constructed, and would not look to re-apportion it to any of the other PUSH partners.