

# CABINET

15 December 2016

## EASTLEIGH LOCAL PLAN 2011-2036:

Progress report on strategic growth options for Eastleigh Borough

Report of the Business Planning Senior Specialist (Local Plan)

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet recommend to Council:

1. That the current position on strategic transport schemes is noted;
  2. That the strategic direction, including the actions set out regarding engagement and technical work on the development proposals in Allbrook, North Bishopstoke and Fair Oak are endorsed and implemented;
  3. That the lack of strategic infrastructure for proposals on the Allington Lane option is noted, and the approach to the proposals is endorsed;
  4. That the approach to considering the role of smaller sites throughout the Borough, including areas not covered by the focus in this report is endorsed; and
  5. That the Development Distribution Strategy & Principles set out in Appendix 3 of this report are endorsed to guide onward work on the Local Plan.
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### Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update as to the feasibility and deliverability of strategic growth options for Eastleigh Borough. In addition, the Government's Autumn Statement last month contained a number of funding announcements which have a bearing on the Local Plan and the feasibility of strategic growth options.

### Statutory Powers

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Planning Act 2008

Localism Act 2011

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Housing and Planning Act 2016

## **Introduction**

1. The meetings of Cabinet and Council of 21 July 2016 considered a report (Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Way Forward) which summarised the position at that time on some key elements of the emerging Local Plan.
2. Since then work has continued on the Local Plan. In September Cabinet considered a paper which reported on the timetable for the Plan. The paper stated –

*The intention is to keep all parties informed through the process. Members will be aware the report considered by Cabinet and Council on 21 July 2016 noted the potential for strategic scale development to contribute towards the Borough's development needs. Work is underway investigating further the feasibility and deliverability of the areas noted in that report and the intention is to report back to Members on progress by the end of 2016, with the implications for the Local Plan.*

3. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with that update. In addition, the Government's Autumn Statement last month contained a number of funding announcements which have a bearing on the Local Plan and the feasibility of strategic growth options.

## **Context**

4. It is worth reminding Cabinet of some key considerations informing the production of the Local Plan and the potential for strategic growth.

### Local Plan

5. The report considered by Cabinet on 21 July 2016 contained a number of key messages on development needs and key recommendations. Council endorsed the way forward on technical work, specifically on housing need, and approved the role that individual smaller sites can make to meet the Borough's development needs. Work on the smaller sites is still on-going.
6. The Council contacted landowners, agents and others in the autumn to inform a refresh of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment document which will be a key stage in the formal consideration of development sites and the role that they can play in meeting needs.
7. The most recent published figures on completed and anticipated housing development over the Plan period is as follows –

<b>Housing delivery 2011-2036</b>	
Current target	16,250
Completions to 2015	1,216
Urban areas including windfalls	3,446
Identified greenfield sites	5,285
Additional supply – Hedge End North	680
Already anticipated and identified	10,627
Remainder – new sites to be found in Plan	5,623

8. Cabinet will note that overall the anticipated delivery from existing urban areas is less than a quarter of the overall total. However, in his report on the previous Local Plan the Inspector did not support the Council's figures on the likely yield from our existing urban areas. That is not to say that this Plan should not prioritise the delivery of brownfield land first – rather that the Council must be reasonably certain in what can be realistically achieved from that source.
9. Therefore on current assumptions, the current plan is seeking to deliver approximately 16,250 homes, of which over 5,600 will need to be found on new greenfield sites. This figure will continue to be subject to review both in terms of evidence on levels of housing need and if permissions are given (or appeals won) on sites which are not included in the figures above.
10. In the report considered on 21 July 2016, Council approved a development strategy which incorporated smaller sites as a way of ensuring a five year supply of housing is maintained in the Plan period and choice in the market. The consideration of those smaller sites is therefore on-going and an updated assessment of available sites is being finalised.

#### Development needs in South West Hampshire and the NPPF

11. Cabinet will be aware that the Council has been working jointly with other members of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) in considering development needs in the PUSH area and how they might best be met. The report considered by Cabinet and Council on 21 July 2016 summarised the position reached in the PUSH Position Statement and the implications for the Local Plan.
12. It is worth reiterating that the PUSH position statement cannot be a given – it is the Eastleigh Local Plan which will determine the level of housing and employment development. However, even on its own terms the PUSH work identifies an unmet housing need of some 2,000 dwellings in the Southampton Housing Market Area in the period to 2034. That is over and above the

distribution of development set out in the Statement, which includes 650 dwellings per annum for Eastleigh Borough.

13. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local plans. Paragraph 14 establishes the following –

*At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.*

*For **plan-making** this means that:*

- *local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

14. Cabinet has already been advised in July that the Council will need evidence to support its position on both development needs and the environmental capacity of the Borough to support development. However, given the clear steer in the NPPF, the forthcoming Local Plan Examination will test whether the Local Plan can do more to meet the unmet housing needs in this area. Put simply - the Council will always be tested on whether it can do more to meet unmet housing needs.
15. In addition to housing needs, there is a need for other uses, including employment land and community uses. The most recent estimate of employment land requirements over the Plan period is that a minimum of between 115,500m<sup>2</sup>-142,100 square metres of additional employment floorspace will be required within the borough by 2036.
16. Against that background, this Report sets out the information available to date on how the strategic growth options could help to meet development needs in this area – rather than a comparative exercise about which option may be better in planning terms.

#### Planning Appeals

17. During the course of this calendar year, the Council has received a number of Inspectors Reports on planning appeals. These are not made for the purposes of the Local Plan – but they do contain useful commentary on planning issues.
18. In particular, the recent appeal decisions at Hamble Station and Bubb Lane demonstrate the continuing importance and relevance of gaps as a valid planning consideration in the Borough, while the Inspector's comments on

housing requirements in the Bubb Lane decision confirmed that housing needs will continue to be contested and subject to scrutiny.

19. The appeal decision at Hedge End North requires careful consideration. The implications for the rest of the area, both in terms of any potential for development and the continuing relevance of gaps, will need to be considered as part of the site allocation process. The decision has obviously added to the list of identified sites with permission set out in the table above. Cabinet should be advised that based on the likely yield from this site within 5 years, and following the methodology endorsed by the Secretary of State the Council is thought to have in the region of 4.5 years' supply of deliverable housing. There is therefore an on-going need for planning applications to be considered on their merits, including any early contribution they can make to housing supply. This is despite the number of extant permissions and identified supply for 10,000 homes, many of which are considered to be deliverable more than five years into the future.

### **Strategic Transport Schemes**

20. The July report gave the current position at that time on a number of key transport initiatives. Taking each in turn, an update is set out below -
21. **Access to Southampton Airport Economic Gateway** (Chickenhall Lane Link Road). Following an indication in the 2016 Budget that the Chickenhall Lane Link Road would be eligible to bid for funding from the Local Majors Transport Fund, and earlier assertions that that road would be delivered by the new Government, the Solent Local Enterprise partnership (LEP) submitted a bid for revenue funding from the Large Local Major Transport Scheme Fund to develop proposals further. The Autumn Statement of 25 November 2016 identified a number of schemes which have been successful. Chickenhall Lane Link Road was not one of them.
22. **Botley Bypass.** A transport business case was prepared by Hampshire County Council in support of a bid for Local Growth Fund funding from Government via the Solent LEP. The Autumn Statement set out the overall funding package to LEPs in each region, however specific allocations to each LEP area have yet to be confirmed. At this time it is still unclear which if any of the prioritised transport schemes will be funded and negotiations are likely to continue over coming months.
23. **Solent Metro.** The Solent LEP sought revenue funding from the national Large Local Major Transport Scheme Fund to develop this concept further, focusing on the potential for tram-train technology in the west of the sub-region and an extension of bus rapid transit in the east. In particular a priority bid was submitted for a metro connection between Southampton International Airport and the Port of Southampton as a first phase. The Autumn Statement of 25 November identified a number of schemes which have been successful. Solent Metro was not one of them. However it is understood that the LEP intends to fund the production of an Outline Business Case to continue to seek funding for the scheme.

24. **Eastleigh Town Centre.** Funding has been secured from the One Public Estate partnership for initial feasibility and development work for re-development proposals in central Eastleigh. The redevelopment proposals would provide the opportunity for significant improvements to the A335 Twyford Road / Romsey Road / Station Hill / B3037 Bishopstoke Road Junction, improving the operational effectiveness of this key junction by providing additional capacity and reducing congestion.
25. **North Bishopstoke Bypass.** Council staff continue discussions with key parties, including Hampshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Network Rail regarding the railway underpass on Highbridge Road, and with third party landowners for the Allbrook Hill link. The current position is outlined in this report and in the *Infrastructure Providers and Regulators Update*.
26. **South Bishopstoke Bypass.** Council staff continue discussions with key parties, including Hampshire County Council, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Both the Environment Agency and Natural England have highlighted issues which would need careful consideration should the scheme be progressed further.
27. Finally, officers have met with Highways England who confirm there remain no plans to pursue delivery of a new **Junction 6 of the M27** as this would be very difficult to achieve in accordance with current design standards.
28. The current status of these proposals, and the context for strategic growth in the Local Plan, is considered as follows.

### **Implications for the Local Plan**

29. Regarding Chickenhall Lane Link Road, Cabinet will be aware that this Council has long promoted its delivery in previous Local Plans and most recently in the decision of the Council meeting of 23 February 2015. A significant hurdle to overcome has always been the prohibitive cost of the scheme. The most recent estimate was in the region of £120m.
30. Following the prominence given to it in the 2015 General Election, the Council reiterated its commitment to the scheme, for instance by ensuring it was contained within the *Eastleigh Strategic Transport Study* and promoting a full link with the Solent LEP as part of the Access to Southampton Economic Gateway (SAEG) work.
31. Following the mention in the 2016 Budget, the Council supported the bid made by the Solent LEP to the Local Majors Fund for further feasibility work to deliver the road. The bid has not been successful. It is understood the LEP will continue to develop proposals to enhance access to SAEG but there remains no firm proposals for a whole link at this time.
32. Given this situation, it is difficult to see how the fundamental issue of funding the link can be resolved at this time. The Council may wish to continue to promote the link, given the acknowledged benefits it would bring, but for the

purposes of bringing forward a development strategy, it would be unwise to place undue reliance on the link being delivered in the Plan period. It is worth confirming that the estimated costs are so prohibitive that any development growth option(s) open to the Council are not thought likely to raise sufficient value to deliver the road without public subsidy.

33. The small award for feasibility funding work for redevelopment proposals in Eastleigh town centre, which would facilitate potential improvements to the A335 Twyford Road / Romsey Road / Station Hill / B3037 Bishopstoke Road Junction is positive. If additional funding can be secured to deliver the junction improvement it would provide the opportunity to make a significant improvement to the operation of this junction and is a positive step in achieving the Council's aim (identified in the Corporate Strategy) of tackling congestion. However, the benefits should not be overstated and it alone is thought unlikely to completely solve the congestion issues in Eastleigh town centre in isolation.
34. The proposals for a North Bishopstoke Bypass have been tested through discussion with key organisations and summarised in this report. There are a number of environmental and delivery constraints and risks which should be recognised and are summarised in the appendices to this report. While those risks could prevent the road from being delivered, at this stage no overriding factor has arisen which confirms that it definitely cannot. Clearly, this is of crucial importance for Cabinet and the Plan and there will need to be a continuous monitoring of that situation as the technical work continues and a need to keep Cabinet informed of progress.
35. Proposals for a South Bishopstoke Bypass have been tested through discussion with key organisations and summarised in this report. Again there are a number of risks to its delivery and some important environmental considerations. It should also be recognised, in light of the position regarding the uncertainty of Chickenhall Lane Link Road, that a South Bishopstoke Bypass would ultimately deliver additional traffic to the congested A335 Twyford Road / Romsey Road / Station Hill / B3037 Bishopstoke Road Junction with limited opportunity to tackle congestion.
36. Finally, Junction 6 of the M27 is not currently being pursued by Highways England and there are no proposals for its delivery.

### **Methodology for Considering Feasibility and Deliverability**

37. The report of 21 July sought Cabinet approval for further technical and investigative work to evaluate the potential for strategic scale development in the northern part of Eastleigh Borough. The report identified two broad areas which have the capacity to deliver development at a strategic scale. These are North Bishopstoke and Fair Oak, and Allington Lane.
38. In both cases the starting point for considering the potential for strategic scale development is areas which have been assembled and promoted to the Council as such. This is not to say that the boundaries of either proposal are in any way "set" by those proposals – the site(s) themselves could ultimately be larger or smaller than the areas currently being promoted, but at this stage it

represents a reasonable first consideration of what could be delivered. Therefore the starting point for each option is the proposals assembled and presented as comprehensive, coherent propositions. The two areas are identified on the map in appendix 1.

39. As an alternative, the area from Bishopstoke down to the M27 has been advocated by parties seeking an alternative to proposals north of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak. Cabinet will be aware that proposals were considered in the late 1990s for a Major Development Area in this broad location which straddled the railway line, with defined gaps between it and the neighbouring communities. Since then, the planning permission for the scheme west of Horton Heath means that that original concept cannot be delivered. Certainly any proposals in this area will need to be considered sensitively to ensure they do not result in the complete coalescence of settlements, that they do not impact on other planning considerations and that they include a satisfactory transport solution. For that reason, at this stage, the Allington Lane proposal is focused south of the railway line, subject to the considerations set out in the previous paragraph. Potential areas for development in the area north of the railway line will need to be considered as part of the site allocations process and this area is not being promoted actively by developer interests as a coherent whole.
40. Accordingly, council staff have conducted a targeted evidence gathering exercise with the promoters of both strategic growth options. Both sets of promoters were given a range of questions to answer around three key areas - suitability assessment and indicative masterplan; availability assessment; and achievability assessment. Those questions are set out in appendix 2. Meetings with both promoters were held in September and October to introduce the task and discuss emerging outcomes – with responses being received from both site promoters in November.
41. The outcome of this work has been the submission of the material contained in the online appendices to this report and summarised below. It is essential for Cabinet to understand that the material contained in those appendices has been prepared on behalf of the promoters of each of the sites and is not the work of council staff. This material enables the Council to test the potential for each option with useful input from the promoters of each site, and helps to articulate a vision for each option in a more accessible way than the “broad areas” approach in the Issues and Options consultation. However, it remains only one way in which it has been suggested the areas could be delivered.
42. Council staff have also undertaken meetings with key organisations, including Natural England, the Environment Agency, Network Rail and Highways England and engaged with a range of infrastructure providers. The outcome of that process is an *Infrastructure Providers and Regulators Update* which is available on the Council’s website at [www.eastleigh.gov.uk/lp36](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/lp36).
43. A short summary has been prepared for each site by staff drawing upon this material and other information contained within the Sustainability Appraisal of the broad areas considered at Issues and Options consultation and the development principles introduced later in this report. An initial SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) has been prepared to



inform Members of the current thinking and issues which will need to be addressed as the Plan moves through the formal process. These SWOT analyses are set out below.

## Summaries

44. Following consideration of the submitted material and the outcomes of the meetings with third parties, the two schemes are summarised as follows:

### Allbrook - Bishopstoke – Fair Oak

45. The material submitted by the site promoters is available on the Council's website at [www.eastleigh.gov.uk/lp36](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/lp36) . The proposal offers the following potential -

- Over 6,000 new homes – of a mix and range of types and tenure that will include: open market housing, affordable housing in accordance with the Council's policy requirements, homes for the elderly and other specialist accommodation. However, it should be noted that this figure may be reduced as a result of mitigation required to offset any adverse impacts on the River Itchen SAC, European protected species, ancient woodland and the hydrological function of the headwaters or headwater streams of the Lower Itchen and Bow Lake streams.
- Strategic transport infrastructure – including a North of Bishopstoke Bypass alongside improvements to the local highway network. However, further work is required to demonstrate the feasibility and deliverability of the required infrastructure.
- Measures to promote sustainable travel – new strategic cycle and pedestrian routes and improvements to existing facilities in the local area; new and improved public transport infrastructure.
- Strategic Green Infrastructure - including public open space and formal recreation facilities, green routes and ecological linkages; extensive areas for strategic ecological mitigation. Public access to parts of the proposed green infrastructure will need to be managed to prevent damage to protected habitats, flora and fauna. Adequate buffers will need to be provided to prevent disturbance to protected species and fragmentation of habitat.
- Community infrastructure - primary and secondary schools, nurseries, community facilities (e.g. community halls), healthcare facilities (e.g. GP / dentists surgeries).
- Over 30,000 sqm of new business and employment floorspace.
- New Local / District Centres to provide shops, services and facilities in hub locations.

46. A fuller explanation of the initial proposal is set out in the online material. It is not intended to be the “last word” in consideration of this option – it enables some consideration of the merits and risks of this option to be summarised.
47. Some key findings of the appraisal are as follows –
48. Key Strengths.
- Potential to deliver strategic transport infrastructure which could reduce congestion in the north of the Borough although further work is required on route alignments, funding and delivery and impact on the River Itchen SAC.
  - Development at a large scale enables secondary school provision to be planned and considered at a strategic scale.
  - High amenity environment with potential to create desirable residential development with good views and access to new and existing recreation and amenity areas.
  - Potential to provide enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure.
  - Potential to provide additional public open space and improved access and to make use of existing assets.
  - The layout, scale and relationships with the existing settlements of Fair Oak and Bishopstoke would enable development to be undertaken at a number of locations concurrently – providing a potential boost to delivery.
49. Key Weaknesses.
- The proposed new transport link is constrained by the Highbridge Road rail over road bridge – potentially reducing the utility of the proposed new link and a significant issue in perception of the option by existing communities and potential investors for employment uses in this growth options.
  - The proposal is of a larger scale than other projects delivered by the site promoters so additional guidance is likely to be required to deliver the project.
  - The proposal to deliver, manage and secure strategic infrastructure is reasonable, but requires a significant amount of further detail before it can be endorsed.
  - Proposed improvements to the transport network have received no objection in principle from the Highway Authority subject to further details and assessment work being undertaken once precise details are better understood to ensure the mitigation is both appropriate and deliverable.

- The capacity of the site is constrained by European, national and local designations within the red line boundary.
- The relative proximity to the National Park will need to be further addressed, both in terms of any potential visual impact (including “dark sky” policy) and upon tranquillity, particularly through increased traffic movements.
- Effects on Air and Water Quality are unquantified and suitable mitigation strategies will need to be developed to avoid any adverse impacts on the River Itchen SAC.
- Care will have to be taken that increases in population would not lead to an unacceptable pressure upon existing wooded areas.
- The potential provision of a new road between Stoke Park Woods and Crowdhill Woods needs further consideration as there is potential to impact upon ancient woodland, bats and other protected species.
- Healthcare provision has been identified as particularly difficult to serve this growth option.
- Hydrological modelling of the area is likely to be required, given the presence of headwaters.

#### 50. Key Opportunities.

- There is the potential to create a new self-contained settlement that protects important landscapes and maintains the character and identity of existing settlements.
- Government support and funding is available to assist Local Authorities in working in partnership with site promoters to deliver ‘Garden Villages’. A ‘new communities’ networking group made up of 14 Local Authorities exists supported by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Communities and Local Government (CLG).
- It is an area of greenfield land where a high degree of land value uplift to assist with achieving high quality and strategic infrastructure is conceivable.
- Site promoters have expressed a willingness to consider alternative funding mechanisms to help deliver strategic infrastructure including working in partnership with EBC.
- All relevant landowners are working together to ensure the availability of land critical to the delivery of the strategic growth option.

#### 51. Key Threats.

- The potential for this option to adversely affect the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC). If it is not possible to avoid or mitigate impacts on the integrity of the SAC, the Council would need to demonstrate that there are no alternative development strategies that would avoid or have a lesser effect and that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) sufficient to override the harm to the site, before being able to proceed with the inclusion of this proposal in the emerging local plan. Should this be required it is generally acknowledged that the IROPI test is passed in only the most exceptional of circumstances.
  - Strong opposition to strategic development from local communities and the need to develop a shared vision.
  - Careful management will be required to ensure that planning applications for sites within this area do not undermine the delivery of strategic infrastructure.
  - The cost of the North Bishopstoke Bypass may escalate beyond initial assessments as design work progresses and more accurate costs become available which could make delivery unviable.
52. In summary, the significant challenges in delivery of this scheme should not be underestimated. Significant further work is required to determine and confirm the deliverability of the option.
53. However, it must be noted that this option does offer the potential to deliver strategic infrastructure and, in the case of the possible North Bishopstoke Bypass, or an opportunity to relieve congestion - one of the Council's key aims as set out in the Corporate Strategy – through the provision of a new road link. Further work will be required to confirm the efficacy and deliverability of the new link – but the potential is there.
54. For that reason, it is recommended to Cabinet that the Council confirms its commitment to act in progressing this option. That commitment contains the following –
- **Political actions** – for example, to engage with neighbouring authorities on the Duty to Cooperate and to take the lead in engaging with local communities;
  - **Technical work** - to continue to address the issues highlighted to date and other issues as and when they are identified, to enable the Council to proceed with site selection; and
  - **Corporate actions** – to bring the Council's wider place-making role to bear, including investigating the potential for the Council to facilitate delivery through taking a direct stake in this proposal, including to give certainty over the delivery of strategic infrastructure.

55. In order to demonstrate this commitment, the Council should undertake the following –

- Consideration of governance and engagement issues, including focused engagement with neighbouring authorities to address the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate and undertaking bespoke work on understanding community aspirations and concerns, priorities and expectations, to inform the work going forward.
- Consideration of the broad framework set out in the submitted masterplan to take account of landscape sensitivity, accessibility, the need to buffer and protect sensitive assets within the area including ancient woodlands and other land holdings to settle on a defined boundary and framework masterplan.
- Further engagement with all infrastructure providers, including transport, education, and health to consider in more detail the likely needs.
- Bespoke viability and financial appraisal advice to consider the interrelationships between developer contributions, other public and private funding streams, measures such as New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy to secure infrastructure.
- Guiding further survey work and modelling as necessary to understand the potential for contamination across the site and the hydrology of the area.
- An assessment of the air quality impacts on the River Itchen SAC and the extent to which they can be mitigated.
- Further work to develop an understanding of the extent to which any mitigation required might affect the developable area.
- Further technical investigation, including investigation of alternative strategies for dealing with the constraint at the Highbridge Road rail over road bridge. This should include an investigation into the use of an alternative or additional pedestrian and cycle route utilising another underpass to the south.
- Continuing investigation of the appropriateness, feasibility and route of the new road link, with particular focus on the potential impact upon protected species; the potential for any direct and indirect impact upon European designated sites and species; the potential for increase in costs and the operation and capacity any delivered link.
- Comprehensive highways and traffic modelling and assessment of both this strategic growth option and other development proposed within the Local Plan, to include consideration of the potential impact upon the road network and on communities both within and to the north of the Borough.

- Securing specific assistance in this work through existing contact with the Homes and Communities Agency, the Garden Villages movement, and other parties interested in seeing an increase in the provision of quality development.
56. It must be stressed that this list is not exhaustive – but sets out the strategic direction of travel for actions and work required before the deliverability and merits of the scheme can be determined and a final decision made whether to proceed with this proposal in the Plan.

#### Allington Lane

57. The material submitted by the site promoters is available on the Council's website at [www.eastleigh.gov.uk/lp36](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/lp36) . The proposal offers the following potential -
- Approximately 2,500 new homes including 35% affordable, delivering approximately 875 dwellings to help address local needs including family homes and later living accommodation, including potential for two 60 bed care homes.
  - Focused interventions within the existing highway network on the basis of promoting sustainable transport and high levels of self-containment.
  - Making use of rail and bus capacity in the existing area and potentially enabling the future provision of new railway station.
  - An extensive network of recreation, open space and green/blue infrastructure.
  - Equipped and informal play areas including sports provision.
  - Natural open space.
  - Green buffers.
  - Sustainable Urban Drainage.
  - Approximately 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of new B1 employment floorspace.
  - Associated development including two primary schools designed as two-form-entry, local centre to include scope for retail, leisure and community facilities, and further small-scale community/retail facilities through the development.
58. A fuller explanation of the initial proposal is set out in the online material. It is not intended to be the “last word” in consideration of this option – it enables some consideration of the merits and risks of this option to be summarised.
59. Some key findings of the appraisal are as follows -
60. Key Strengths.

- Relatively unconstrained ‘agricultural land’ in close proximity to strategic infrastructure including transport, schools and employment.
- Potential to provide enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Potential to provide additional public open space and improved access to existing facilities.
- Minimises reliance upon strategic transport infrastructure (though it is understood from Hampshire County Council that promoters will need to identify and provide a link to the strategic road network).
- Appropriate and well planned mitigation measures for water quality issues in relation to the European sites.
- Experienced national housebuilder owns a large proportion of the site. Land assembly and site promotion appears to be well coordinated.

#### 61. Key Weaknesses.

- No improvements to strategic transport infrastructure are proposed by the promoters however it is understood from Hampshire County Council that the promoters will need to identify and provide major transport connections to the strategic road network as part of their proposals including the M27 and M3.
- Proposed improvements to the transport network have not been fully tested, and at this stage discussions are ongoing with the Highway Authority to identify and develop an appropriate access strategy.
- Capacity of the site is constrained in part by noise impacts of the M27.
- Effects on Air Quality need confirmation and suitable mitigation strategies will need to be developed to avoid any adverse impacts on the River Itchen SAC.
- Viability will have to be considered further should an appropriate transport solution be identified and once the costs are understood.

#### 62. Key Opportunities.

- There is the potential to create a new settlement that has a measure of self-containment that avoids areas of critical environmental and ecological importance and maintains some separation from existing settlements.
- The site has multiple points of entry and so could deliver dwellings from more than one area – leading to quicker delivery overall.
- Government support and funding is available to assist Local Authorities in working in partnership with site promoters to deliver ‘Garden Villages’.

A 'new communities' networking group made up of 14 Local Authorities exists supported by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Communities and Local Government (CLG).

63. Key Threats.

- The potential for this option to adversely impact upon the European designated sites needs to be carefully considered at each stage of the proposal.

64. There are a number of issues and further technical work to be done which would be required to fully determine the deliverability of this proposal. However, key at this stage is the lack of a strategic transport solution. Previous work on the Major Development Area proposal in the same vicinity indicated that the Chickenhall Lane Link Road would be required to serve the development. The current proposals do not include delivery of the road and the cost of delivering the road via private funding alone is understood to be prohibitive. There is a lack of provision for new strategic transport infrastructure. However, that does not mean that it cannot technically be delivered in highway terms.

65. The site promoters are advocating at this stage a transport solution based upon limited local network interventions, and on the basis of promoting sustainable transport and high levels of self-containment. The current statement from Hampshire County Council as Highways Authority set out in the *Infrastructure Providers and Regulators* document indicates that more work will be required to “*identify appropriate mitigation in the form of connections to the wider Strategic Road Network and to demonstrate to the Highway Authority that a workable transport solution can be found. Given the constrained nature of the highway network surrounding the potential site, the Highway Authority would expect to see major new off site infrastructure including new / improved links to the Strategic Road Network, in particular connections to the M27 Junction 7 and Junction 5, and to the M3*”. Therefore at this time there is much more work to be done to identify an appropriate access solution including suitable transport mitigation.

66. In summary, the main unresolved issue with the delivery of this proposal is an acceptable transport solution, including links to the strategic road network.

67. The position regarding wider strategic transport infrastructure has already been set out in this report. The delivery of Chickenhall Lane Link Road is extremely uncertain at this point. The proposed South Bishopstoke Bypass would only deliver additional traffic to the existing A335 Twyford Road / Romsey Road / Station Hill / B3037 Bishopstoke Road Junction. There are no proposals to deliver Junction 6 of the M27. The Solent LEP is expected to confirm production of an Outline Business Case for the Metro project but the beneficial effect of this is necessarily limited.

68. Given these circumstances, the onus here will be on the site promoters to develop a scheme which does address strategic infrastructure needs and in



particular identifies a transport solution which adequately addresses the requirements of delivering the option.

69. In that context it is recommended that the Council continues to engage with the LEP to monitor progress with the Solent Metro project and other strategic transport schemes, and maintains a dialogue with the promoters of this option to ensure that on-going work on the Plan is informed by a close understanding of what may be achieved, particularly the position regarding their emerging transport work.
70. As that process develops the planning merits of the proposal and other development down Allington Lane, including land previously assessed as Option D in the Issues and Options consultation, will continue to be considered and assessed as the Plan is progressed.

### **Issues relating to Strategic Scale Development**

71. The July report noted that strategic scale developments have been a feature in a number of Hampshire authorities in recent years, and provide the opportunity for new communities to be planned from the outset with comprehensive master planning and mechanisms for securing the appropriate infrastructure when it is required.
72. However, planning, funding and delivering strategic scale development is subject to additional challenges over and above those for smaller scale development. Partly for that reason the Government has a range of initiatives to support proposals, including Garden Village prospectus and Capacity Funding support.

### **Playing a part in delivery**

73. It is important to note that development is rarely secured by public or private efforts alone, but usually requires partnership – strategic scale development is even more dependent upon this partnership approach. This includes securing infrastructure funding, providing long-term certainty for investors and providing a focus for community aspirations.
74. The Council already takes a proactive approach to delivering development. Together with Fareham Borough Council, First Wessex and Radian the Borough Council has a stake in a joint venture which it can use to play a role in delivering development. It also has a history of taking a direct stake in development in the Borough.
75. Strategic scale development, which takes many years to plan and develop, requires long-term commitment and the Council can ensure continuity should other parties move on.
76. Therefore staff are continuing to explore the potential for promoting strategic scale development in Eastleigh and securing funding assistance for meeting development needs.

## **Implications for the Plan**

77. Delivering a new Plan is a key priority for the Council. The Local Plan is by its nature an iterative programme of work, with the potential for new workstreams and pieces of work to be identified and requirements to be amended in light of changing circumstances, including the legislative background.
78. The paper considered by Cabinet in June 2016 summarised the responses received during the issues and options consultation. The report considered by Cabinet and Council in July 2016 highlighted a range of additional technical work required to inform the next formal stage in the plan-making process. That work is either underway or will shortly be commissioned. Not all of the work required is being prepared solely on behalf of the Borough Council. For example, an Integrated Water Management Study has been commissioned jointly with neighbouring authorities.
79. Critical pieces of work, which will be required before the Plan can be finalised and final decisions taken, include a Transport Assessment incorporating a new round of transport modelling and transport evidence; work on the viability of development; infrastructure requirements; work on environmental impacts and a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. However, this paper sets out the key direction of travel for that further work.
80. To comply with the law for Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, it is essential that the likely significant effects of the plan and the alternatives are identified, described and evaluated in a comparable way. Therefore the Council will be undertaking a continual process of testing decisions and judgements about the options, alongside, and in support of, the work outlined in this report.
81. The legislative requirements are such that a final decision on preferred options can only be made once refined options are tested, and outline reasons for not adopting alternatives are provided.
82. However, progress has been made in considering further the whole Plan principles initially described in the “way forward” report in July.

## **Development Principles**

83. Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land for development in their local plans and to demonstrate that the chosen strategy is the most appropriate when considered against all reasonable alternatives. The extent to which authorities do this is assessed as part of the public examination process and forms one of the NPPF’s ‘tests of soundness’. A Local Plan could be declared ‘unsound’ either on the basis that it is not founded on a clear strategy for allocating land or because it has not properly considered all reasonable alternatives. Given the relatively compact settlement pattern of the Borough a series of principles have been devised to guide decisions and justify the approach taken to allocating new greenfield sites for development.

84. The principles are based on national planning policy, the Council's corporate objectives, sub-regional strategy prepared by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), the local plan evidence base, the comments of the previous local plan inspector and the response to the Regulation 18 issues & options consultation and the need to deliver approximately 5,600 dwellings on new greenfield sites. The principles justify the decision to pursue the option of strategic scale development as part of the development distribution strategy. They also reflect characteristics specific to Eastleigh Borough such as the need to retain gaps between key settlements in order to prevent their coalescence and the constraints to delivering strategic scale development on the Hamble Peninsula.
85. The development principles are included as appendix 3 to this report. Cabinet endorsement of these principles is sought to guide to the on-going work on the Plan. That will include the continuing assessment of options for strategic growth and the consideration of smaller sites.

### **Planning Applications**

86. Work on strategic options will continue. In addition, the technical work in considering the role that other, smaller sites across the Borough is on-going and options will continue to be tested against a range of factors, including the latest evidence on housing need and environmental capacity. This will be required before the Plan can be finalised.
87. In the meantime, the Borough Council will receive planning applications for development which will need to be considered. Each planning application must be determined on its own merits, particularly with the need to establish a five year supply of sites for housing. However, it will be important that any proposals which might affect the strategic options are supportive of, and consistent with the delivery of strategic scale growth in the borough and do not undermine their delivery.

### **Financial Implications**

88. Significant financial resources have been made available to the Local Plan project to facilitate its delivery as quickly as possible. The anticipated future costs of the Plan will be met within the committed resources of the Planning Policy & Implementation section and the Council's Development and Local Plan reserve.
89. Delivery of strategic scale development often requires public and private partnerships, particularly in the case of infrastructure. Ultimately, the Council may consider making use of its role to invest in new communities itself, particularly where it helps delivery or improves quality. However, whether or not the Council chooses to take an investment role the delivery of any strategic site will take an extended period and it is essential that the Council provides continuity and undertakes a central place-making role.

## **Risk Assessment**

90. The headline risks to delivery of each of the strategic options are summarised in the appendices.
91. This report updates Members as to the progress made to date in investigating the potential for strategic scale development. It is essential that formal decisions made on the Plan process itself are informed by proportionate evidence with a reasoned justification. Whatever development strategy is ultimately taken forward in the Plan it will potentially be challenged both in terms of soundness and in terms of legal compliance. Therefore Members are advised that this report is an update – not the formal decision on the plan process.
92. The Government has made it clear that an increase in the level of new housebuilding is a priority. It is vital that the Council has an up to date Local Plan in place as soon as possible, alongside a five-year housing land supply, in order to avoid the risk of development proposals not in accordance with the Council's preferred direction being submitted and approved on appeal.
93. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 conferred additional powers on the Secretary of State regarding the ability to direct the preparation of all or part of a Local Plan. Council staff have met with CLG civil servants to discuss progress with the Plan and this emerging timetable. From those discussions, it is clear that to mitigate the risk of direct intervention from CLG the Council should expedite the delivery of the Local Plan as quickly as possible in accordance with a credible, deliverable timetable.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

94. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken and the outcomes published alongside the proposed submission plan. Previous assessments in relation to the 2011-2029 Local Plan identified no potentially adverse impacts for any particular group.

## **Recommendation**

95. Given the information set out in this report, it is recommended that Cabinet recommend to Council:
  1. **That the current position on strategic transport schemes is noted;**
  2. **That the strategic direction, including the actions set out regarding engagement and technical work on the development proposals in Allbrook, North Bishopstoke and Fair Oak are endorsed and implemented;**
  3. **That the lack of strategic infrastructure for proposals on the Allington Lane option is noted, and the approach to the proposals is endorsed;**

4. **That the approach to considering the role of smaller sites throughout the Borough, including areas not covered by the focus in this report is endorsed; and**
5. **That the *Development Distribution Strategy & Principles* set out in Appendix 3 of this report are endorsed to guide onward work on the Local Plan.**

NATALIE WIGMAN  
Corporate Director Strategy

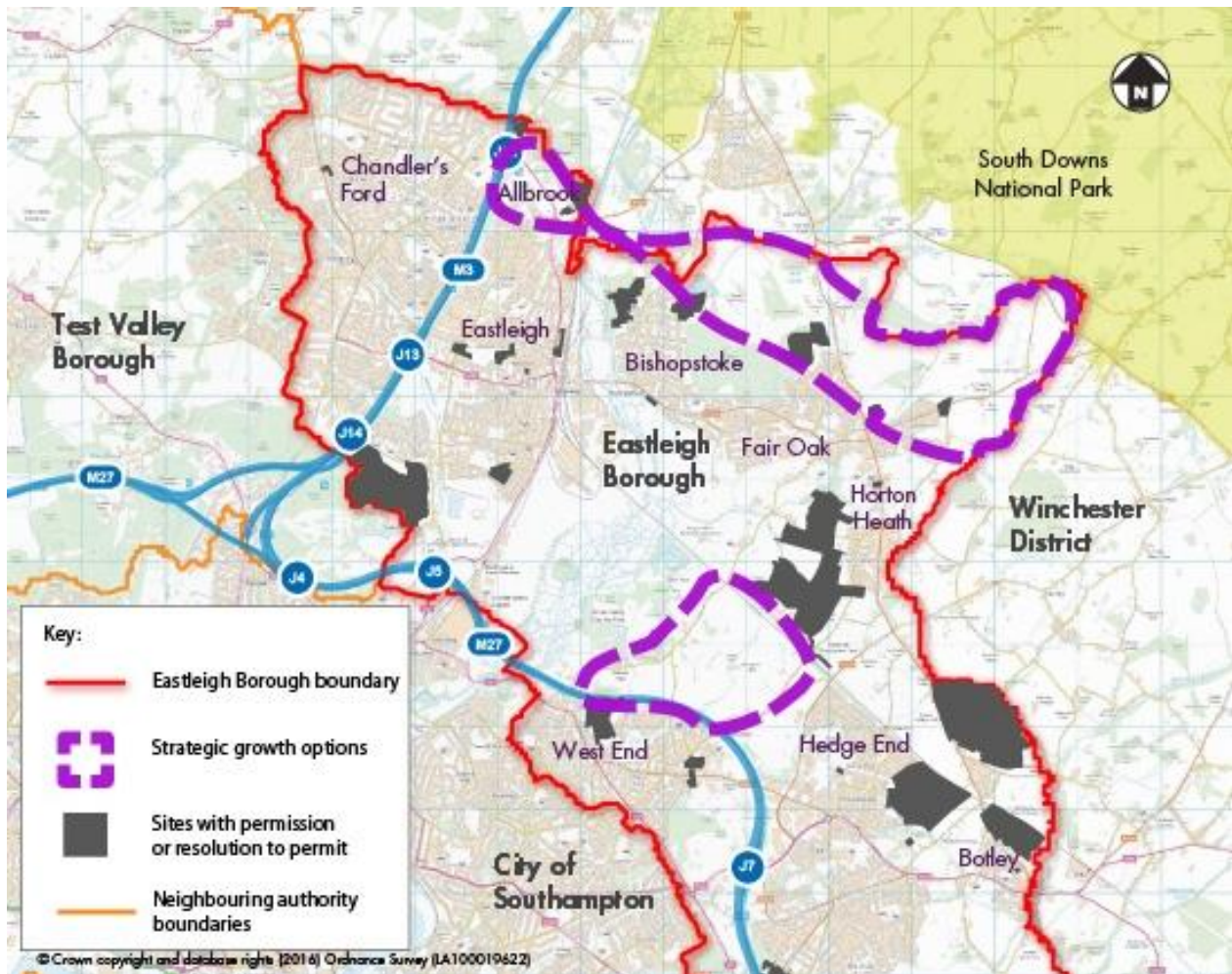
Date:	15 December 2016
Contact Officer:	Toby Ayling
Tel No:	02392688242
e-mail:	toby.ayling@eastleigh.gov.uk
Appendices Attached:	3
Report No	RPP539

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information:

None

Eastleigh Local Plan 2011-2036 Strategic Growth Options



Strategic Site Assessment

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## A. Suitability assessment & indicative masterplan

- A.1. Identify major constraints that impact on the proposed area; and provide necessary appraisals including a landscape appraisal and hydrological survey to determine the extent of headwaters (if appropriate) and identify appropriate buffers;
- A.2. Detail measures that could be used to overcome the constraints;
- A.3. Considerations of air quality and other impacts on European designated sites, along with any potential mitigation measures;
- A.4. Provide a broad outline of how it is envisaged that the site would be laid out;
- A.5. Explain how they view the provision of affordable housing of all types including starter homes;
- A.6. Explain how the proposal will deliver high quality sustainable places through the use of e.g. Design Codes
- A.7. Explain how the proposal would relate to / improve local facilities and transport networks;
- A.8. Identify any wider economic, environmental and community benefits that would flow from the development proposal;
- A.9. Identify how the information required to support the Appropriate Assessment to the plan will be provided.

## B. Availability assessment

- B.1. Provide evidence of the extent to which land is under the control of the site promoter;
- B.2. Explain how it is proposed that this site will be delivered – e.g. through the sale of serviced parcels;
- B.3. Explain how the relevant market considerations have been considered, including the scale and type of housing delivery, rates and phasing;

## C. Achievability assessment

- C.1. Identify the additional infrastructure that is critical to the delivery of the site;
- C.2. Specify what provision would be made in financial appraisals for providing new infrastructure or upgrading existing infrastructure;
- C.3. Explain proposals for how infrastructure will be funded and delivered, particularly with regards to the provisions of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations and restrictions of pooling developer contributions;
- C.4. Detail any exceptional costs that might be involved in developing sites or overcoming constraints.
- C.5. Viability information to demonstrate the site can be brought forward.

# Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2036:

## Development Distribution Strategy & Principles

### Executive Summary

- Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land for development in their local plans and that they demonstrate that their chosen strategy is the most appropriate when considered against all reasonable alternatives.
- It is important that the Borough Council clearly articulates and agrees its strategy for the emerging 2011-36 local plan before decisions are made about preferred options or allocating particular sites or areas.
- This is because the extent to which Councils do this is assessed as part of the public examination process and is one of the NPPF's 'tests of soundness' (the 'justified' test).
- A local plan could be declared 'unsound' either on the basis that it is not founded on a clear strategy for allocating land or because it has not properly considered all reasonable alternatives.
- The distribution strategy must comply with the core planning principles of the NPPF and other relevant considerations.
- A key element of the emerging local plan distribution strategy is that it is an urban / brownfield first strategy which seeks to deliver as much development as possible (without compromising other policy objectives) within the urban edge and on brownfield sites.
- The plan will aim to deliver 16,250 dwellings by the end of the plan period (2036) which equates to 650 dwellings per year. This level of development meets the Council's Objectively Assessed Housing Need; a key requirement of the NPPF.
- It is estimated that approximately 10,600 of these dwellings have either already been completed, are committed or are estimated to come forward on small, urban or windfall sites.



- This leaves approximately 5,600 dwellings to be found on new greenfield sites.
- In deciding how and where to allocate these 5,600 dwellings the Council has taken into account:
  - Government Planning Policy and legislation
  - The council's corporate strategy and objectives.
  - The Duty to Co-operate and sub-regional planning work through the PUSH.
  - The emerging local plan evidence base in the form of the SLAA, SA, HRA and Strategic Transport Study.
  - Previous local plan strategies, Inspectors' comments and relevant aspects of previous evidence.
  - The Regulation 18 Issues & Options consultation, the public and stakeholder response to that consultation and related Cabinet reports.
  - Environmental and infrastructure constraints and opportunities.
  - The merits or otherwise of seeking to accommodate a significant proportion of the 6,250 residual housing requirement in the form of a single, sustainable, mixed use new community.
  - The extent to which a new community might be complete within the plan period and the need for other smaller greenfield allocations to provide choice and variety in the housing market, continuity of supply and demonstrate that the Council has a 5-year supply of deliverable sites.
- These considerations have resulted in the following spatial strategy and principles:
  - **The local plan will seek to deliver an increase in housing provision compared to previous plans in order to provide a more diverse mix of housing (including affordable and specialised housing) to meet the borough's objectively assessed housing need and contributing (where feasible) to meeting the needs of the wider Southampton housing market area;**
  - **The borough's settlement hierarchy should be the main consideration in making decisions about the spatial distribution of new development to ensure that development is located in areas which provide the widest range of employment opportunities, community facilities and transport infrastructure and in order to support,**

**enhance and reinvigorate those areas;**

- **Development will be focused first on suitable brownfield sites within the defined settlement boundaries of the borough's most sustainable settlements;**
- **However, given the tightly drawn boundaries of those settlements and the scale of development likely to be required over the plan period, the plan will need to make provision for a significant scale of new greenfield development;**
- **In accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, the opportunity to deliver a substantial proportion of this new greenfield development on a new Strategic Growth Option will be explored;**
- **Based on good practice and experience elsewhere, if there is to be a single Strategic Growth Option, it should be at least 1,500 in size in order to achieve a degree of self-containment and to achieve a critical mass sufficient to deliver new infrastructure provision, for instance in the form of new road links to the strategic highway network ;**
- **The option of identifying a Strategic Growth Option will be derived from sites and areas identified in the SLAA, assessed through the SA and sites actively promoted for such development.**
- **Any strategic development must result in the creation of a new, sustainable, mixed use community and should demonstrate it will enable the provision of new and improved infrastructure and employment and other opportunities such as could not be provided by a series of smaller extensions to existing settlements alone;**
- **Even if a Strategic Growth Option is pursued, smaller greenfield extensions to existing settlements will still be required in order to ensure a continuity of housing supply throughout the plan period, to provide choice and variety in the housing market in terms of the size, type, tenure, mix and location of new development and to help ensure the Council maintains a 5-year supply of housing land;**
- **All new development should result in the creation of high quality, well-designed sustainable communities providing for a range of housing and other needs and should seek to protect the environment, in particular avoiding harm to protected environments and landscapes;**

- **The separate identity of settlements and local communities should be safeguarded by ensuring the retention of undeveloped countryside gaps between them and avoiding decisions which would result in their coalescence;**
- **Development should seek to maximise opportunities to improve the availability and access to community and recreation facilities and enhance the network of green infrastructure provision across the borough;**
- **New development should capitalise on opportunities to address existing deficiencies in the transport network, should not materially exacerbate problems in existing areas and where feasible should seek to encourage a modal shift away from reliance primarily on the private car;**
- **There should be no significant additional development in the Hamble peninsula because of transport constraints, minerals safeguarding and the vulnerability of the open and undeveloped countryside gaps between settlements in this area and Southampton, the outer borders of which are clearly visible from many parts of the peninsula.**