

# **CABINET**

**11 December 2017**

## **EASTLEIGH BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN (2016-2036)**

### **Report of the Local Plan Advisor**

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#### **Recommendations**

**It is recommended that Cabinet recommends to Council:**

- (1) To approve in principle (subject to the caveats hereafter set out in (a) and (b) below) the 'pre-submission' Local Plan and update to the policies map (Appendices 1 and 2) and gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to:**
  - (a) finalise the wording and content of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (including updating the maps in Appendix 2), following the completion of technical studies (subject to the results of these not significantly changing the content of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan);**
  - (b) to complete and update the evidence base prior to submission provided this does not lead to a significantly different approach needing to be taken in the Local Plan;**
  - (c) upon completion of (a) undertake a Regulation 19 consultation on the final Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 - 2036); and**
  - (d) following (a), (b) and (c) above, submit the final Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036) to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 20.**
- (2) To approve the updated Local Development Scheme (as set out in Appendix 3 of this report) and give delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any further updates as necessary.**
- (3) To consider the outcomes of the focussed engagement 'Shaping Your Community' with local residents and businesses as set out in Appendix 4).**
- (4) To support the ongoing engagement with local communities, neighbouring councils and statutory agencies through the 'duty to co-operate' and 'Shaping Your Community' and with developers.**

## Summary

The Localism Act 2011 and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require that each Local Planning Authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. The Council now needs to ensure that it achieves a 'sound' Plan, in accordance with the Government's planning policy, the NPPF. Since 2015 Eastleigh Borough Council has been working towards the preparation of a Local Plan for the period 2016 – 2036. The Local Plan sets out the policies and plans to guide future development within Eastleigh Borough up to 2036. It will be the statutory document against which individual planning applications are determined. The Local Plan therefore has a key role in shaping the future of the Borough.

This report sets out the new Local Plan for Eastleigh Borough for the period 2016 – 2036. When the final technical background studies have been completed, provided they do not lead to a significantly different approach needing to be taken in the Local Plan, the Local Plan will be finalised and be open to public consultation before being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. The Secretary of State will appoint a Planning Inspector to examine the Local Plan, the technical evidence which underpins it and the representations made during the public consultation on the Local Plan, which will take place in 2018.

The Local Plan identifies how much development is required and key locations for this development, together with the infrastructure and services needed to support new and existing communities and identifies areas which will be protected from development. The Local Plan sets out policies to guide the right type of development to meet the Borough's needs over the next two decades.

The Local Plan also sets out an approach to helping to meet the development needs of the Borough over the next two decades through planning for a new settlement which follows the principles of garden villages. This approach is recommended by the NPPF, which sets out national planning guidance for Plan-making and decision-taking. The principle of concentrating some development within Strategic Growth area(s) has been tested as the Local Plan has progressed from Issues and Options consultation and technical work (including masterplanning) has been commissioned in order to ensure that this approach is deliverable and provides Eastleigh Borough with an exemplar development that helps the Borough meet its future growth needs in a sustainable way.

This Plan is informed by a range of evidence and technical background studies, some of which are being finalised. When the Local Plan is published for consultation it will incorporate the findings of all the evidence. Although much of this work is complete, some of it is ongoing. Whilst officers are confident that the initial findings support the approach taken within the Local Plan, if the outstanding evidence does not support that approach the final Plan will be changed to reflect this; and if this leads to a significantly different approach needing to be taken in the Local Plan, it will be brought back to Council for a decision.

Following the Council noting the Emerging Local Plan in July 2017 there has been a community engagement campaign that has helped the community and businesses better understand the Local Plan. The results of this are set out in Appendix 4.

In November 2017, Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local

Government wrote to fifteen Councils, including Eastleigh Borough Council, advising of the risk of government intervening if the Council does not deliver a Local Plan in a timely fashion.

The timescale for delivering the Local Plan is set out in the updated 'Local Development Scheme' (LDS), which is in Appendix 3. It is important that the Local Plan is delivered in line with the published timescale set out within this. This is something that all Planning Authorities are required to publish and it is against this that Government measures progress and can take action to intervene if we are not delivering a Plan in a timely fashion. This report sets out the continued progress that the Council has made to ensure we have a Plan that is ready for the formal public consultation and subsequent submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

### **Statutory Powers**

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Localism Act 2011

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

## **Strategic Implications**

1. The Local Plan is a significant strategic document which will enable delivery of many of the Corporate Plan objectives including:
  - Tackling congestion
  - Developing green infrastructure
  - Enabling healthier lifestyles / wellbeing
  - Increased provision and more diverse mix of housing
  - Ensuring appropriate infrastructure including employment land.

## **Background**

2. The previous draft Local Plan (2011 – 2029) was found 'unsound' by an independent Planning Inspector in February 2015 because he felt it did not fully meet the need for homes overall, affordable homes or short term delivery.
3. The previous draft Local Plan (2011-2029) went through four wide-ranging public consultations which helped shape the broad development strategy. With the exception of the approach to delivering the required housing numbers, the previous draft Local Plan informed the Issues and Options document.
4. In 2015 the Council commenced work on the new Local Plan (2016-2036). This set out the key strategic Issues and Options to deliver more housing and sought views on 38 questions, which included a number of options for strategic growth.

5. Following approval by Cabinet and Council in December 2015, the Council consulted on the Issues and Options for an 8 week period between December 2015 and February 2016. The Council contacted over 4,000 individuals and organisations. 1,150 respondents made 3,300 individual representations, in addition to a petition signed by approximately 250 persons. Understandably given the potential for significant change around existing communities a wide range of concerns were raised.
6. In June 2016 Cabinet noted a report summarising these representations, including the broad responses to each growth option.
7. In July 2016 Cabinet were updated on the work undertaken by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) on the Position Statement and associated technical work (including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment SHMA). This identified the levels of need across South Hampshire for new housing and employment land, both annually and for the period up to 2036. The report also set out that the Position Statement identified potential capacity in the northern part of Eastleigh Borough to accommodate strategic-scale mixed use development. This was based on desktop studies of site constraints across the PUSH area. Whilst the Position Statement is clear that a Borough's housing requirement and the location of any strategic development must be established through a Local Plan, the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan has been informed by the PUSH Position Statement.
8. The July 2016 Cabinet report set out that a target of 650 dwellings per annum (dpa) is required to deliver a total housing requirement over the Local Plan period 2011-2036 of 16,250 homes. Taking account of completions and capacity within the urban areas totalling 4,666 homes, together with greenfield sites with permission and resolutions for permission totalling 5,285, this would still leave an additional requirement of 6,300 homes on additional greenfield sites.
9. The July 2016 Cabinet report concluded that given the levels of housing need, it was appropriate to continue work considering the potential to deliver sustainable development on a strategic scale. The report summarised the progress being made in identifying and considering strategic scale development. The report confirmed that the Issues and Options consultation outlined a number of broad spatial options for locating development.
10. The report stated that of the locations identified in that consultation, there were two areas which were considered to have the capacity to deliver development at a strategic scale (North Bishopstoke and Fair Oak and North of West End, Allington Lane).
11. With regard to the first option at North Bishopstoke and Fair Oak this was identified in the Issues and Options as B & C and provides a theoretical capacity of up to 6,200 homes and associated uses. Option B generated significant opposition due to the sustainability of the location; the impact on the countryside; landscape; gaps; South Downs National Park; biodiversity and ecology impacts; the provision of community facilities; lack of other infrastructure; the loss of a natural asset for recreation; harm to the local

economy; and transport impacts including congestion and reliance on the private car. There were also a number of issues raised which related to the desirability and deliverability of the associated bypass. Option C had strong community opposition on the basis of impact on village character and identity (loss of gaps); impact on nature conservation; traffic concerns; impact on equestrian activities; and impact on the setting of the South Downs National Park. There was also concern that Option C would require Option B in order to deliver the North Bishopstoke bypass.

12. The report confirmed that development of Options B and C would be dependent on and support, the delivery of strategic transport improvements including the North Bishopstoke Bypass and that infrastructure costs for other strategic development proposals which were part of development plans that had been found sound at Examination indicated that the development should be viable.
13. The report also stated that *“Responses to the Issues and Options consultation have raised a number of issues which will need to be addressed in the coming months before deliverability can be confirmed”*.
14. The other strategic location that was discussed in the July 2016 Cabinet report was the area North of West End, Allington Lane (predominantly within Option E and the southern part of Option D). Proposals for a Major Development Area (MDA) were previously promoted and considered by the Council.
15. The report confirmed that the land west of Horton Heath now had permission for 950 houses which meant that the original MDA concept could not be delivered. The report also confirmed that the development of all of Option E, if combined with Option D, would lead to the coalescence of settlements and that the estimated infrastructure cost (including the Chickenhall Lane Link Road) raised significant concerns over the deliverability of this strategic scale development within the Local Plan period.
16. The report concluded that *“although it cannot be categorically ruled out the delivery of strategic development in the area must be seen as doubtful at this time”*. The July 2016 report concluded that officers will investigate and challenge these proposals further alongside assessments of the options including their sustainability to enable a preferred option to be selected.
17. Cabinet agreed that the Council continues further technical and investigative work to evaluate the potential for strategic scale development in the northern part of Eastleigh Borough, including promotional activities in seeking funding and technical support. The July 2016 report to Cabinet also provided an update on the work arising from the Issues and Options Consultation. The report confirmed that the issues raised in the consultation highlighted a range of additional technical work required to inform the next formal stage in the Plan-making process.
18. In December 2016 Cabinet and Council considered and agreed a detailed technical report which set out the work that had been undertaken by officers and site owners/developers on the two development options that had been

identified in the July 2016 report. This included a SWOT analysis of both options (looking at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

19. In December 2016 Cabinet and Council also agreed the 'Development Distribution Strategy and Principles' be endorsed to guide onward work on the Local Plan. This is in Appendix 4 and sets the context for how the Council will allocate sufficient land to deliver the required housing development within the Borough in the Local Plan period. This Strategy informs decisions about preferred options and allocation of sites.
20. At the December 2016 meetings of Cabinet and Council the strategic direction, engagement and technical work on the development proposals in Allbrook, North Bishopstoke and Fair Oak were endorsed and implemented. Cabinet and Council were updated that the proposals for a North Bishopstoke Bypass had been tested through discussion with key organisations. Whilst there were a number of environmental and delivery constraints and risks which should be recognised (and those risks could prevent the road from being delivered), at that stage no overriding factor had arisen which confirms that it definitely cannot. It was on this basis and the fact that further technical work would be undertaken, that Cabinet and Council supported the further development of this approach.
21. At the December 2016 Cabinet and Council, the lack of strategic infrastructure for proposals on the Allington Lane option was noted. The prohibitive cost (estimated at c. £120m) of the Chickenhall Lane Link Road and lack of available funding was confirmed as a reason for not pursuing this option in the Local Plan process.
22. At the December 2016 Cabinet and Council the approach to considering the role of smaller sites throughout the Borough was also endorsed.
23. In April 2017 Cabinet noted progress on the Local Plan. This included progress on updating the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) and further technical work on the delivery of Strategic Growth Options (SGOs), the deliverability of smaller sites, environmental studies and the Duty to Cooperate. It is important to note that this report stated that *"the Council will not make a decision on which SGO(s) to select until the 'Selection of Strategic Growth Areas' work is complete"*. Cabinet also endorsed the response to the representations received on the Issues and Options consultation.
24. In June 2017 the Cabinet agreed a preliminary designation of countryside gaps.
25. In July 2017 the Council noted the Eastleigh Local Plan (2016-2036) Emerging Approach. This included:
  - (a) development requirements over that period of 14,580 new homes and 108,000 sq. m of new employment space;
  - (b) a Strategic Growth Option to the north and north east of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak, to accommodate a new community of approximately 5,200

new home, 30,000 sq. m of employment space, retail centres, schools, other community facilities and open spaces; approximately 95 new homes at Allbrook Hill; alongside a new link road north of Allbrook, Bishopstoke and Fair Oak; (noting that the development quantum is subject to further testing);

- (c) other new development sites to accommodate in total approximately 1,704 new homes and 110,940 sq. m of new employment;
  - (d) protection of the countryside gaps; and
  - (e) strategic, development management and site policies on other sites to guide the provision and form of development and infrastructure and protect important environmental and heritage areas.
26. Council also noted that the Eastleigh Local Plan Emerging Approach was based on the wide range of emerging evidence available at that stage but important evidence remained outstanding on a range of matters. It confirmed that the Council would only be in a position to make a decision on the Local Plan once all the relevant evidence was available and all the options had been fully considered.
27. Further technical work has been completed since July and this report sets out that there is sufficient certainty about the direction of travel taken in the Local Plan to guide future development in the Borough over the Plan period. However, this judgement is based on the technical work that has been completed and on interim indications from technical work that is underway. Final confirmation of the Local Plan will only take place once all of the technical evidence has been completed, reviewed and assessed against the wording and policies within the Local Plan. The recommendation seeks delegated authority for this decision to be taken by the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Leader of the Council). If however, the outstanding technical evidence leads to a significantly different approach needing to be taken in the Local Plan then this will be brought back to Council for a decision.
28. The July 2017 report and background appendices set out in detail the purpose of the Local Plan; the stages of its preparation so far - the vision and strategy; the need for new development; the basis for the selection of housing sites; the emerging selection of a Strategic Growth Option and associated delivery issues, the approach to retail, leisure, Gypsy and Traveller uses; to countryside gaps and urban edges and to development management policies.
29. The July 2017 Council report demonstrated the Council is planning positively for the new homes needed in a Strategic Growth Option and a range of smaller sites. The Council was made aware that the emerging Local Plan gave an initial direction of travel to facilitate further testing. It also made clear that once the testing and engagement on the emerging Plan and current and further evidence was complete, the Council would make a decision on a pre-submission Local Plan, after which any interested party will have the opportunity to make written representations regarding that Plan.

30. In November 2017, Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to fifteen Councils, including Eastleigh Borough Council, advising of the risk of government intervening if the Council does not deliver a Local Plan in a timely fashion. If these councils do not demonstrate sufficient progress this could result in the Secretary of State intervening and making a decision on the Local Plan, thereby taking the decision away from the councils.
31. The timescale for delivering the Local Plan is set out in the updated 'Local Development Scheme' (LDS), which is in Appendix 3. It is important that the Local Plan is delivered in line with the published timescale set out within this. This is something that all Planning Authorities are required to publish and it is against this that Government measures progress and can take action to intervene if they are not delivering a Plan in a timely fashion. This report sets out the continued progress that the Council has made to ensure it has a Local Plan that is ready for the formal public consultation and subsequent submission to the Planning Inspectorate.
32. The 'Duty to Cooperate' is a requirement of the Localism Act, which is also reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These require Local Plans to be based on cooperation with neighbouring authorities to maximise the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans. It is important to note that it is not a duty to agree. Since work started on the Local Plan in 2015 there has been ongoing positive dialogue between officers from Eastleigh and Hampshire County Council, and all neighbouring Councils, including Winchester City Council, Southampton City Council and Test Valley Borough Council. This has built on the collaborative sub-regional work undertaken by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), in which Eastleigh Borough Council plays an active part. As technical work continues to be undertaken, the results of this will continue to be shared with neighbouring Councils.

## **Community Engagement**

33. In July 2017 Council approved the use of the Eastleigh Local Plan Emerging Approach as the basis for focused engagement. It was with this in mind that 'Shaping Your Community' was developed. A two way engagement process, not part of the formal planning process or a duty to consult, but focussed on getting information out and gaining insights from residents, organisations and businesses and about their priorities and needs.
34. 'Shaping Your Community' was launched in October 2017. Businesses, local organisations and residents were targeted through a digital survey that was distributed through a wide range of existing networks. This was supplemented by ensuring hard to reach groups received paper copies. The digital campaign was followed by invitations to businesses and Town/Parish Councils to attend a series of meetings which took place in October and November.
35. The survey was supported by a wide range of information that could be accessed via the Eastleigh Borough Council's website, which also hosted the survey. This information included links to all of the key technical information

on the Local Plan, should people want to look in more detail, some key facts and a short video which explained the Local Plan.

36. The interim results and analysis are set out in Appendix 4. Overall more than 1,500 surveys were completed by residents, organisations and businesses from across Eastleigh Borough and from neighbouring parishes in the Winchester area. The initial analysis clearly highlights the key priorities for residents, organisations and businesses in these areas.

#### Residents:

- i. Traffic congestion and maintaining countryside gaps between settlements/avoiding urban sprawl are the top two issues, irrespective of age, gender or area of residence.
- ii. Medical facilities become increasingly important with increased age. Comments have shown that it is not just excess waiting times for appointments but ability to get to surgeries due to distance and lack of public transport.
- iii. Air quality and noise are a significant issue with residents identifying clear links:
  - More houses = more cars, but inadequate infrastructure, therefore creating congestion, declining air quality and increased noise.
  - Therefore many fear that further new housing will worsen this problem.
- iv. Affordable housing was the top priority for those aged 18-29 years but with so few respondents in this age group this issue doesn't rank very highly overall.
- v. Nature conservation and biodiversity was an important issue for those living in the north of the Borough and in the neighbouring Winchester parishes.

#### Businesses

- i. Traffic congestion was also a major issue for businesses in terms of getting both goods and staff to and from work spaces.
- ii. There is a need to better understand the needs in terms of the right type and range of premises required. Small start-up businesses have limited options of premises to grow into; there is a risk of losing businesses to neighbouring areas.
- iii. There is a wide range of skills shortages, high specialist technical and low skills are all required. More work is needed to fully understand the needs across the Borough.

- iv. Broadband is a particular issue for smaller businesses, often those working from home outside of Eastleigh Town where speeds are lower.
  - v. The survey showed that the availability of customers is an issue. This is complex and varies between businesses and therefore needs further research.
37. The issues outlined above can be addressed by Eastleigh Borough Council and its partners in a number of ways:
- i. The Council must ensure the Local Plan supports the needs of residents and businesses, both existing and future, by allocating sufficient land for new housing and employment spaces, along with the necessary infrastructure, settlement separation and green spaces.
  - ii. Long term delivery of the Local Plan – in implementing the Local Plan the Council needs to take a proactive role to ensure:
    - the right mix and tenure of housing, including sufficient affordable housing
    - the right mix of employment spaces is delivered so that as businesses develop and grow the right premises are available within the borough.
  - iii. Working with partners, the necessary infrastructure is provided, again taking account of local issues and circumstances.
38. A range of issues were raised by residents and businesses which cannot be addressed specifically by the Local Plan or how it is implemented. Because these issues are important the Council should work with partners to ensure they are addressed. Examples include:
- i. Skills - Eastleigh Borough Council's Economic Strategy and delivery of this must address the issues raised about skills needs across the Borough and gaining a better understanding of supply chains, in particular one of the key issues raised through this engagement of local customers.
  - ii. Public Transport – the Council needs to work with its partners to ensure that there is adequate access between housing, services and work places.
39. 'Shaping Your Community' has been successful in engaging large numbers of members of the public from across the Borough with a quick and simple format. This led to greater numbers of people giving us their views than at the Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan. Meetings have added value and it is clear that the conversation needs to continue to fully understand the issues and what role the Council can play in addressing them.

40. The results of the engagement give a confidence that the Local Plan is on the right track in addressing the right issues for residents and businesses. The Council can address the specific issues set out in paragraph 36 through adopting the Local Plan, undertaking a pro-active role in delivering the housing, employment space and infrastructure. Whilst it is important to note that the Local Plan cannot be used as a vehicle for addressing existing traffic congestion, the Council is committed to working with partners, including Hampshire County Council and Highways England to address this.

### **The Local Plan Vision and Strategy**

41. The Local Plan sets out how it helps to meet the Council's Corporate Objectives of achieving:
- (a) A Prosperous Place – provision of affordable, accessible and adaptable homes and high quality job opportunities;
  - (b) A Green Borough – maintaining and improving settlement gaps, the countryside, historic environment and green infrastructure; addressing climate change, air quality, congestion and improving accessibility by 'non-car' means of travel; and
  - (c) A Healthy Community – improving health, education and cultural provision and the quality of life.
42. It then translates this into a Local Plan vision:
- “To ensure development in Eastleigh Borough and its communities delivers a strong and sustainable economy with an adequate supply of housing and infrastructure that supports improved standards of living for residents while protecting the distinct identity of towns and villages and preventing urban sprawl; promoting thriving and healthy communities; and maintaining an attractive and sustainable environment that residents value”.
43. The Local Plan then sets out objectives and strategic policies on sustainable development; the settlement hierarchy; new development; the Strategic Growth Option; countryside, countryside gaps and the coast; green infrastructure; community facilities; and transport.

### **Housing**

44. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.
45. The latest evidence on the objectively assessed need for new homes has primarily been undertaken by the PUSH (and represents evidence of Eastleigh Borough Council's 'duty to co-operate' with surrounding councils), is based on

housing market areas and districts and takes into account all the following factors in line with national guidance:

- (a) Demographic/household projections: the natural change in the population and number of households. The main driver of future needs is more people living for longer in smaller households.
  - (b) Economic projections: based on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Solent Economic Strategy's aim to achieve 2.7% economic growth. Whilst this growth is focussed first on 'up skilling' local residents, it will also attract new people in to the area to work (net in-migration).
  - (c) The affordability of homes: In Eastleigh Borough house prices are 9.3-10.2 times higher than income, which means it is very difficult for younger people to get their foot on the housing ladder. In 2016 there were 1,890 households on the Council's Housing Register. An 'uplift' in housing provision is needed to improve affordability, address overcrowding and help to provide affordable homes.
46. The objectively assessed need for Eastleigh was identified by PUSH to be 580 dwellings per annum and Eastleigh has since undertaken an update for its own Borough (taking account of Inspector's appeal decisions) which identified the need to be 630 dwellings per annum. However, the need identified in the Local Plan is higher for the reasons set out in paragraph 45.
47. In particular, the PUSH Spatial Position Statement set a target for Eastleigh Borough which equates to an annual average of 650 dwellings per annum for the period 2011 – 2034, which included an allowance for unmet needs in the wider Housing Market Area (HMA). The Council rolls forward this target to the 2016 – 2036 period, also taking account of the lower level of completions since 2011. The Local Plan target is therefore for 14,580 dwellings (2016 – 2036), or 729 dwellings per annum. This is above the Council's latest objectively assessed need (630 dwellings per annum) and slightly above the Government's draft assessment of need based on a standard methodology (715 dwellings per annum). The Council is therefore still planning for growth above its own needs to help meet unmet needs in the wider HMA (although only slightly based on the draft Government figures).
48. As set out in the July 2017 report to Council, it is recommended that, in line with the Development Distribution Strategy and Principles, the Council will need a Strategic Growth Option together with a range of smaller sites, to meet its housing needs within the Local Plan period. An explanation of the methodology for calculating need and how the sites have been identified to meet that need is set out in the background paper in Appendices 7 and 8. This includes an explanation of the methodology used in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA): how the Council assessed the 214 original sites to arrive at a comparative assessment of 41 sites and an update of the latest work which relates to an extra 10 sites which were omitted previously and following a review, have been assessed now – resulting in 4 more allocations (all small). The background paper also explains how the Council

has undertaken a comparative assessment of the sites and assessed their development capacity. This is summarised in paragraphs 49 – 51 below.

49. The SLAA includes all 214 sites identified by developers, landowners and planning officers and undertakes a consistent baseline assessment of them against all relevant planning criteria. Site promoters have been able to comment on the factual accuracy of the assessment of their own site. A significant number of these sites do not need further assessment because the principle can readily be established that they either can be developed (they have planning permission, or are urban sites), or cannot be developed (e.g. the site is covered by an ecological designation); or because there is currently no reasonable prospect that they can be delivered. The remaining sites were, where adjacent to each other, merged to create 41 larger sites.
50. An initial comparative assessment of these 41 sites has been undertaken against the NPPF criteria and a sustainability appraisal of them has been completed and published. The comparative assessment has prioritised the protection of countryside gaps and therefore sites which scored 'poor' in these terms have been ruled out from development. It has also ruled out sites that harm biodiversity designations.
51. The sites which pass this stage were then put through an initial assessment of their potential development capacity, based on site specific issues (such as trees of value, listed buildings and road access). The Local Plan includes policies to guide the development of these sites based on this assessment. This comparative assessment process has led to sites being designated for housing that enable the Council to fully meet the assessed need for new homes.
52. The Local Plan also has a target of 35% for affordable housing on all qualifying sites. This has been derived from Government guidance, local circumstances, future needs, recent ministerial statements and case law on the matter.

## **Employment Needs and Sites**

53. The Employment Land Supply Background Paper explains how the Local Plan target of new employment floorspace was derived and how various sources of supply have come together to meet the target. Following a recent review of the methodology for calculating this requirement it has been revised from the 108,000 square metres to 144,056 square metres of new employment floorspace for the period 2016-2036 which was reported in July 2017.
54. Employment policy in the Local Plan is largely carried forward from that contained in the Revised Pre-Submission Draft 2011-2029 version of the Local Plan.
55. In terms of land availability the paper concludes that sufficient land is allocated and available in the Borough for employment use. Indeed the Local Plan will be able significantly to exceed the employment floorspace target. However, this is largely due to the presence of long-standing employment allocations on

two sub-regionally significant employment opportunity sites at Eastleigh Riverside/Southampton Airport Gateway.

56. The Council considers that this combination of new and carried forward site allocations, a flexible approach to new employment land supply and seeking to retain key existing employment sites for further employment use (where a loss would not be permitted development) provides a sensible, flexible and robust approach to ensuring an adequate supply of employment land is available throughout the Local Plan period.

## **Transport and Accessibility**

57. The Local Plan aims to minimise pollution by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport and to ensure access to facilities for people without cars. In identifying potential development sites the issues considered are the proximity to the nearest shopping centres, to supermarkets, schools, doctors' surgeries and public transport. These have been informed by a previous Transport Assessment (2013), a public transport assessment, the NPPF and the PUSH Position Statement.
58. The Council has commissioned independent consultants to undertake strategic transport modelling using the South Hampshire Sub-Regional Traffic Model (SRTM) to test the traffic impacts of various development options to support the Local Plan process. This has involved the creation of a 'baseline' which plots the development levels set in the Local Plan as modelled against the existing transport network. From this baseline a Transport Assessment is produced which identifies a range of infrastructure improvements across the highway network. Once these improvements have been designed and costed they are then tested with a further SRTM model. This allows the Council to model and understand the likely impact of development within the Local Plan and test whether highway improvements can adequately mitigate the impact of the growth over the Local Plan period. Given the importance of addressing congestion, as raised in the recent 'Shaping your Community' engagement, it is important to ensure that the Local Plan will not have an adverse impact on the Borough's road network.
59. The final traffic modelling work will be completed in the spring 2018 and this will inform the Local Plan. However, because this work is not complete yet an interim SRTM model has been commissioned based on Option B/C. This has been commissioned to provide indicative results focussed on traffic/highway capacity impacts only.
60. The results of this work are set out in the Technical Note in Appendix 11. This interim study incorporates improvements to the highway network which have been identified at an outline, conceptual level as likely mitigations for the development impacts. These include the following strategic network:
  - i. M3 Smart Motorways – Winchester (Junction 9) to M27 (Junction 14/link to M27 J4)

- ii. M27 Southampton Junctions scheme (M27 J8, Windhover Roundabout and A302 Bitterne corridor improvements into Southampton)
  - iii. Botley Bypass and related improvements on Woodhouse Lane.
- 61. New interventions on the local Eastleigh network have been incorporated at the following locations
  - i. M3 Junction 12
  - ii. Allbrook Village
  - iii. Highbrook Road junction with proposed North Bishopstoke Bypass Road
  - iv. Fair Oak junctions (3)
  - v. Denhams Corner roundabout
- 62. This model has represented highway conditions up to the year 2041. Known developments and committed (funded) highway schemes are included within the model's scenarios (2019, 2026, 2031, 2036 and 2041) to provide the most accurate representations of future road network conditions.
- 63. A Local Plan delivering the scale of development required is likely to add to traffic congestion somewhere in the Borough whichever SGO is chosen. Unlike options D or E, option B/C proposes to create a completely new road route. It is also important to note that traffic will increase between today and 2036 as a result of developments already permitted within the Borough, development outside the Borough and general traffic growth. This is reflected in the 2036 baseline model and indicates what will happen before the new development proposed by the Local Plan is added. The interim results show that the total Borough wide delays at 2036, with the major new Local Plan development, the link road and other preliminary highway enhancements, is about the same as the baseline at 2036 without the new development or highway enhancements. Total network delays in the morning peak are 4% lower and in the afternoon peak are 1% higher than in the 2036 baseline. This suggests that the major new Local Plan development with the link road and preliminary highway enhancements will not add to the extra delays which will have arisen by 2036 from current developments and background growth. For example: this is the position predicted along Bishopstoke Road, with the model predicting no material change in queue lengths or delays in the interim Local Plan scenario compared to the 2036 baseline. It should be noted that the full transport modelling is still to be completed and this will enable the relative benefits of each option to be fully assessed.
- 64. It is important that collaboration and joint working continues to take place with Hampshire County Council and Highways England in respect of highways matters. As the final phase of the traffic modelling and the improvements to the road network are scoped and designed there will be close working between the highways team at Eastleigh Borough Council and those within Hampshire County Council and Highways England, in order to secure joint

agreement on the nature and design of an appropriate highway network to serve the growth within the Borough through the Plan period.

## **Countryside Gaps and Landscape Sensitivity**

65. Cabinet approved the approach for countryside gaps in June 2017. It was agreed that gap designations should focus on those areas needed to be kept open in order to protect the physical and visual separation and character of settlements at risk of coalescence, with clearly identified and defensible boundaries, whilst not preventing development needs from being met. The 'Shaping Your Community' engagement identified that this is a high priority for many communities within and adjoining the Borough to maintain clear visual and physical separation between existing settlements.
66. The Settlement Gap Policy Review in Appendix 10 sets out further analysis of why it is important to identify and maintain gaps between some settlements within the Borough; and the future gap policy is in accordance with national and PUSH policy. The principles set out also informed the selection of preferred options by assessing the potential impact on settlement pattern, character and identity.
67. In particular, an appraisal of the areas between existing settlements in Eastleigh has been undertaken to see if they met the 'criteria for gaps' recommended by PUSH. This has informed the Gap Policy in the Local Plan. The background paper concludes that the Local Plan should include the designation of a single tier of gaps between main settlements. It has also concluded that the Policy is referred to as a 'Settlement Gap Policy' which is separate from a Countryside Policy. This is considered to be preferable to combining it into a countryside policy as was put forward in the previously submitted Eastleigh Local Plan 2011-2029.
68. The Council has had regard to landscape sensitivity in identifying the relative merits of each potential development site within the Local Plan. Paragraph 91 details the landscape sensitivity assessment for the Strategic Growth Options B/C, D and E.
69. The Council has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of national parks, including when considering development which might impact on the setting of a park. This includes conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of parks. The potential impact of the SGO options on the setting of the South Downs National Park has been assessed as being minimal due to views of the development being very remote (the nearest key view point is 7km away).

## **Air Quality**

70. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF requires that planning policies in Local Plans should "*.....sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local plans. Planning decisions should ensure that any new*

*development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan.”*

71. The Environment Act 1995 Part IV requires Local Authorities to carry out a ‘Review and Assessment’ of local air quality. The monitoring of air quality at key points in the Borough against statutory pollutant thresholds has resulted in the Council having to declare 4 areas in the Borough as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS)
- Eastleigh Town Centre
  - Eastleigh M3
  - Botley High Street
  - Hamble Lane
72. Air quality is a matter addressed in all recent versions of the Local Plan. Policy DM8 is a direct carry-forward of DM7 in the previous Local Plan. It is also identified in the Local Plan as Issue G9 – air quality and other forms of pollution.
73. Following a recent review of the Local Plan’s approach to air quality, consideration is now being given to include a bespoke policy on air quality which identifies the AQMAS and identifies the sort of mitigation measures which the Council might expect to see delivered as part of new development in or adjacent to AQMAS. Consideration is also being given to adding air quality and/or minimising adverse impacts on designated AQMAS as a reference in the local plan objectives and in Strategic Policy S1. This will be addressed in the final wording of the Local Plan.
74. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory requirement by virtue of the Local Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. SAs were carried out for the Issues & Options consultation paper and for the appraisal of greenfield site options for the Emerging Local Plan and included air quality as a consideration. This Plan will also be subject to a SA before its final form is agreed. This will ensure that the Council has assessed the cumulative/in-combination effects of proposed site allocations and policies on air quality rather than the effects of allocations/policies in isolation.

## **Biodiversity**

75. The River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site are protected under European and national law. Plans, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, must (subject only to considerations of overriding public interest) avoid adverse effects on the integrity of these sites. Mitigation measures can be incorporated into plans to achieve this. If an adverse effect cannot be ruled out, the Local Plan can only proceed if there are no alternative solutions and there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) for it to do so. The NPPF explains at

paragraph 119 that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

76. An initial Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was prepared for the Issues and Options paper. Further assessment has been undertaken and this will inform a final HRA to ensure that the nature of any adverse effects are fully understood, to ascertain whether such effects can be mitigated and to ensure that the Local Plan is supported and informed by a robust and thorough appropriate assessment.
77. The NPPF aims to minimise the impact on (and where possible achieve a net gain in) biodiversity, recognising the relative importance of different internationally, nationally and locally designated sites and the ecological networks between them and the need to preserve priority habitats; to allocate the land of least environmental value where consistent with other policies of the NPPF; to avoid significant harm (by locating development on less harmful sites) or to adequately mitigate that harm; to incorporate biodiversity in and around development and to refuse development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland unless the need for or benefit of development in that location clearly outweighs the loss.
78. The Local Plan, including the allocations within it, in combination with other plans and programmes, must not have an adverse impact on sites which have an internationally or nationally important habitat designation (assessed with mitigation measures) which would conflict with law or policy. For the strategic growth areas the key issues to consider are covered within paragraphs 92-108 of the report.
79. The final HRA is currently being put together and, when finalised, will provide the certainty that the Local Plan (including the SGO and all other sites) will not harm the biodiversity designations and habitats within the Borough. The supportive stance taken by Natural England in developing the mitigation measures have helped inform the ongoing work on the HRA. The outcome of this will inform the final decision to proceed to the Regulation 19 consultation and submission of the Local Plan.

### **Strategic Growth Options**

80. There is a major need for new development in Eastleigh Borough over the Local Plan period to 2036 as identified by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire's (PUSH) Spatial Position Statement (2016) and supporting reports of objectively assessed need.
81. The Council's Issues and Options paper (December 2015) set out 8 different Strategic Growth Options (SGOs) to help meet this need for development. Public consultation and a Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken on these options.
82. The Council approved its 'Development Distribution Strategy and Principles' paper on 15 December 2016. This set the principle of exploring the delivery of

a substantial proportion of the new green field development needed in a Strategic Development Area (towards the upper end of the 4,000 – 6,000 dwelling range), in order to achieve a degree of self-containment and to deliver significant new infrastructure (including roads).

83. The Council noted the emerging Local Plan on 20th July 2017 based on two of the SGOs (SGO B/C north of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak). The rationale for this emerging SGO selection was set out in the Council report. Nevertheless the report identified some gaps in the evidence and that further assessment was required. Therefore the decision was simply to note the Emerging Plan.
84. The background paper in Appendix 9 explains in:
- Part 1: The comparative assessment of the different SGOs, leading to the reasons for the recommendation to select SGO B/C; and in
- Part 2: The reasons why it is considered there is a reasonable prospect that SGOs B/C can be delivered.
85. The detail contained within the background paper leads to a conclusion on the preferred SGO, subject to the completion of the final evidence. The rationale for this is set out in the following paragraphs.

## **Transport and Accessibility**

86. National policy promotes walking, cycling, the use of public transport and a reduction in car use and explains development should be supported unless traffic congestion is severe. Option E is closer to Southampton but this is considered unlikely to have a major benefit on travel distances given the wide range of destinations people travel to. Options D or E might have the potential in theory for a form of rail access in the long term and this is considered at best very uncertain. Option B/C benefits from better existing bus services, it is also a considerably larger development. Therefore it is considered likely that it could support more new local facilities and so reduce longer distance car trips. It is also considered likely that the potential gap to bridge achieving a commercially sustainable bus services is less than for option E. Therefore with regard to these transport issues, in overall terms options B/C are considered to be better.
87. The Council is undertaking transport modelling to understand likely levels of congestion on the highway network. A Local Plan delivering the scale of development required is likely to add to traffic congestion somewhere in the Borough and surrounding areas whichever SGO is chosen. Unlike options D or E, option B/C proposes to create a completely new road route. It is also important to note that traffic will increase between today and 2036 as a result of developments already permitted within the Borough, development outside the Borough and general traffic growth. This is reflected in the 2036 baseline model and indicates what will happen before the new development proposed by the Local Plan is added. The interim transport model results show that the total Borough wide delays at 2036, with the major new Local Plan development (based on including option B/C), the link road and other

preliminary highway enhancements, is about the same as the baseline at 2036 without the new development or highway enhancements. Total network delays in the morning peak are 4% lower and in the afternoon peak are 1% higher than in the 2036 baseline. This suggests that the major new Local Plan development with the link road and preliminary highway enhancements will not add to the extra delays which will have arisen by 2036 from current developments and background growth. For example, this is the position predicted along Bishopstoke Road, with the interim model results predicting no material change in queue lengths or delays in the Local Plan scenario compared to the 2036 baseline. It should be noted that the full transport modelling is still to be completed and this will enable the relative effects of each option in terms of congestion to be fully assessed.

## **Countryside Gaps**

88. National policy seeks that Local Plans reflect local circumstances and characteristics that communities are empowered to shape their local areas, that a strong sense of place is created and that development integrates into the natural environment. The Local Plan consultation and engagement exercises have revealed that one of the key priorities for local communities is to protect countryside gaps. South Hampshire and existing Council policy identifies the importance of countryside gaps to maintain the separation and distinct identity of towns and villages.
89. None of the SGOs are currently in a countryside gap and each is of a scale that the consequent need for gaps should be considered.
90. It is considered that options B/C enable the creation of an appropriate countryside gap with Colden Common, Lower Upham and Horton Heath consistent with the scale of each community. It is considered that if options D or E were selected a strong gap would be needed within the remaining area to separate the major urban area of Southampton / West End from Bishopstoke / Fair Oak. Taking account of development already permitted in parts of option D and the strength of gap boundaries, it is considered that option E would be better preserved as a gap<sup>1</sup>. Therefore it is considered that options B/C or D are better in terms of protecting the future countryside gaps needed.

## **Landscape**

91. National policy seeks the protection of valued landscapes, commensurate with their national or local designation. The Council has analysed whether the SGO landscapes have a high, medium or low sensitivity to change. A slightly higher percentage and significantly higher total of SGO B/C's area is considered to be of high sensitivity, relative to SGO E. SGO D has the least high sensitivity land. It should be noted that none of the SGOs are designated for their landscape value and the majority of all of them are classed as having

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<sup>1</sup> Recognising that any overall choice between D and E would need to take into account a wide range of other planning factors.

moderate or low sensitivity to change. However the conclusion is that in themselves, SGO D and then E have less potential for impact on landscapes. A Local Plan based on these SGOs will need development elsewhere in the countryside, for example in part of option C which could affect some additional high sensitivity areas. This may reduce their benefits to some extent, although the most extensive high sensitivity area in option B would remain undeveloped. Options D and then E are still considered to have less overall potential for impact than SGOs B/C. It should also be noted that the eastern extent of option E is relatively close to the boundary of the South Downs National Park. It is understood that this is unlikely to significantly affect views from the National Park.

## **Biodiversity**

92. Regulations and policy promote the careful protection and enhancement of biodiversity designations, commensurate with their international, national or local designations. None of the SGOs involve the direct loss of a designated area. SGO B/C would include a link road which would use the existing and re-aligned Highbridge Road which crosses the River Itchen SAC (Special Area of Conservation) at two points. The re-aligned road will include a replacement bridge across the River Itchen SAC (at a specific point where the SAC is confined to the river itself) and will also bring the road closer to the wider SAC covering the adjacent floodplain. Each SGO is close to various designations and to varying degrees contain ecological networks important to those designations.
93. The following paragraphs set out in 'high level' terms how it is considered that each SGO could potentially have an effect prior to mitigation and the latest evidence regarding the mitigation of those potential effects. It is important to stress that the full Habitat Regulations Assessment for the recommended Local Plan is to follow.

### *International Designations*

94. Atlantic salmon/otters/(water vole): these species traverse the River Itchen and in some cases its tributaries. SGO B/C involves a new bridge (replacing an existing bridge) across the River Itchen. Each SGO includes tributaries. Safe and effective passage for these species is required. Mitigation measures are to be confirmed but are likely to include the appropriate design of the bridges and (within development areas) buffers around tributaries.
95. Recreational Disturbance: SGO E followed by D has the potential for the most effect as they are closest to the Solent and the Itchen. A definitive mitigation strategy is being agreed for the Solent.
96. Other Disturbance (e.g. light spill): If development in SGOs D or E, or the SGO B/C link road were to generate the potential for light spill, careful lighting design would be required.

97. Hydrology: Each SGO contains a different mixture of headwaters and water courses. Mitigation measures are to be confirmed but are likely to include development buffers, sustainable drainage and bridge design.
98. Southern Damselfly: Following the precautionary principle, all options have the potential for an effect, although SGO B/C would probably have the potential for the greatest effect. The extent of any mitigation measures required is to be confirmed but a Conservation Strategy has been prepared which examines habitat enhancement and creation opportunities in and adjacent to the Borough.
99. The AECOM Report concludes that predicted levels of atmospheric nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) and resultant nitrogen deposition will have no likely significant effect on Southern damselfly within the River Itchen SAC. However, this was based on traffic and air quality modelling undertaken in 2016, which does not take into account more recent modelling nor the precise distribution of development which is now recommended. Furthermore, the comprehensive surveys that have been undertaken on behalf of the Council by Ben Rushbrook for Arcadian Ecology have demonstrated the presence of water courses with Southern damselfly within the 50m buffer from the road which were not identified by the AECOM report.
100. Jonathan Cox Associates have reviewed the survey findings from Arcadian Ecology and have concluded that this does not significantly alter the conclusions of the AECOM Report for the effect of model DS2a on Southern damselfly. Arcadian Ecology support the conclusions of this work that, based on the information currently available, predicted levels of atmospheric nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) and resultant nitrogen deposition associated with the proposed link road alongside Highbridge Farm will have no likely significant effect on Southern damselfly. However, although it accepts it is likely that the findings will be consistent with this work, Arcadian Ecology recommends that similar assessments are carried out for the remaining three main distributor routes for completeness.
101. Should changes to the model and consequent levels of nitrogen deposition change, it may be that a precautionary approach to the Habitats Regulations Assessment will conclude that mitigation is required to avoid predicted impacts of increased nutrient load on the habitat of the Southern damselfly.
102. Overall, Arcadian Ecology consider that 'reasonable scientific doubt' exists and therefore an assessment of 'no likely significant effect' cannot be concluded under the Habitats Regulations without mitigation measures. Therefore, it is considered that the precautionary approach must be adopted, and that measures are required to mitigate predicted impacts of increased road traffic of the Southern damselfly. This could be achieved by the delivery of a suite of opportunities of the kind identified in the recently reported Southern damselfly conservation strategy. As explained above, it is considered that this strategy will lead to a significant improvement in the resilience of the species as a whole and will have considerable ecological benefits overall.

103. The Habitats Regulations Assessment will take this latest information into account, and will inform the Local Plan when it is signed off for Regulation 19 consultation.

#### *National Designations*

104. Woodland: SGOs B/C have the potential for a greater effect on woodland, in this case ancient woodland, the interlinking habitats and the species they host. It is considered that mitigation can be put in place, including for example development free buffers and green infrastructure.
105. Great Crested Newts: SGO D has the potential to have the greatest effect. The Council is putting a mitigation strategy in place.

#### *Overall*

106. It is important to note that a Local Plan based on D or E will lead to development elsewhere in the countryside, potentially in part of C, so would also have the potential for some further potential effect on for example woodland; which to some extent could slightly narrow the relative advantages of SGOs D or E in respect of this issue.
107. The position regarding the relative potential for SGOs to have an effect is mixed. Each SGO is considered to have the potential for an effect without mitigation. The likely scale of that effect without mitigation may sometimes vary depending on the SGO and the issue being considered.
108. The assessment of whether these potential effects can be mitigated appropriately in the terms set by regulation and policy is emerging, in-particular through the Habitat Regulations Assessment. This evidence will be completed in a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to a level sufficient to inform the Local Plan. In most cases further evidence or consideration of detailed measures will be required at the development management stages and the Local Plan policies reflect this. It is considered that in general terms the HRA Screening Report supports the view that each SGO has the potential for an effect and that the HRA will be reviewed culminating in a detailed HRA for the submission Local Plan.

### **Other Environmental Issues**

109. Most of the other environmental considerations will affect the detailed design or phasing of development rather than the overall merits of each location for development. However it should be noted that option E has some higher quality agricultural land which would be permanently lost if developed; and for example options B/C need to be designed to avoid increasing the risk of flooding.

#### **SGOs: Conclusions to date**

110. It is considered that SGOs B/C and D will do most to protect the countryside gaps needed (an important local policy with more generic support in national

policy) and furthermore that SGOs B/C will do most to benefit transport/accessibility (an important national and local policy). None of the SGOs affect nationally or locally designated landscapes. SGOs B/C will have most impact on non-designated landscapes with higher sensitivity to change, although it should be noted that the majority of its land is still classed as having moderate or low sensitivity to change. A Local Plan based on D or E will have some landscape impact on other areas of countryside too, for example option C. Each of the SGOs has the potential, without mitigation measures, to affect nearby ecology designations of international or national importance. The Habitat Regulations Assessment will provide the evidence regarding the extent of any mitigation measures required (for international sites).

111. It is important to recognise that there are some specific areas of evidence which are as yet emerging and/or uncompleted. These primarily relate to transport modelling, the Habitat Regulations Assessment and consequent environmental mitigation. Engagement and consultation will continue until the Local Plan is submitted. Therefore the conclusions to date will need to be kept under careful review to identify whether or not they remain valid once the Local Plan evidence is complete.
112. It is considered that in overall terms, on the range of evidence available to date, the key areas of difference between the SGOs are that SGO B/C has greater merit in meeting transport/accessibility aims than SGOs D or E; greater merit in protecting countryside gaps than SGO E; and less merit than SGOs D and E in protecting more sensitive (although non-designated) landscapes. The balance between different SGOs with regard to biodiversity is considered to be more mixed. A full Habitats Regulation Assessment will be completed as explained above.
113. It is considered that national and/or local policy gives some emphasis to transport/accessibility aims and designated countryside gaps and less so to undesignated landscapes. On this basis it is considered that the greater benefits SGO B/C bring to meeting transport/accessibility and countryside gap aims outweigh the lesser merit it has in landscape terms. Therefore the recommendation to Council on 11 December is to approve a Local Plan based on SGO B/C.
114. It is important to emphasise that the relative weight to be given to completely different issues (transport/accessibility, countryside gaps and landscape sensitivity) also has an element of subjectivity to it. It is therefore important that Council makes its decision once Members have carefully considered their views on these issues based on the current evidence.

## **Masterplanning**

115. The Council has commissioned further analysis and testing to help define a clear vision and approach to establishing a masterplan framework that sets a context for a distinctive and desirable place to live while integrating with and enhancing the surrounding landscape and local communities. A summary briefing note is set out in Appendix 16.

116. The project team is focussing on three main strands;
- Constraints and context – Summarising and assimilating the evidence base and studies that have been completed so far and identifying areas for further detailed study.
  - Strategic position – Defining an overall identity and vision for the SGO in relation to existing settlements and landscape assets.
  - Place-making – Establishing design principles and the character of the new settlement and open spaces.
117. This work has identified that a development quantum of 5,189 dwellings can be achieved within the SGO for B/C. It will also lead to more detailed design guidance which will be incorporated in the Local Plan. The masterplanning will be the subject of public engagement as work progresses on it in spring 2018.

### **Retail and Leisure**

118. The Council's assessment considers there is a need across the Borough by 2036 for 2,345 sq. m of food store, 18,564 sq. m of comparison (non-food), eating /drinking, gym, multi-use family and cultural space. Officers consider most of this is likely to be accommodated in centres (including the proposed centre in the SGO) and that any remaining need should be assessed against the NPPF criteria of retail impact and 'centres first' (the sequential approach). This has not changed since the Council report in July 2017.

### **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

119. The Council has completed an assessment of the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and plots to 2036 in line with Government guidance. On this basis there is a need for four to five permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The initial recommendation is to identify four existing currently unauthorised pitches. They are initially considered to be in suitable locations in principle and are deliverable. There is no identified need for a transit pitch but this should be kept under review. There is a need for at least three to five plots for Travelling Show people. At least three plots of this need relates to families on unauthorised plots elsewhere who have expressed a desire to locate in the Borough. Given the uncertainties in some cases regarding the nature of the need and particularly the deliverability of any other sites, in addition to identifying the four pitches the Local Plan includes a positive policy to consider potentially suitable sites as they are acquired and proposed. This has not changed since the Council report in July 2017.

### **Development Management Policies**

120. Following the strategic policies is a suite of more detailed development management policies which set out the matters the Council expects applicants for planning permission to address in their development proposals. They

address such matters as design, layout, flooding, sustainability, energy and water efficiency, space standards, pollution, utilities, nature conservation etc as well as providing more detail on some of the strategic policies identified above on development in the countryside, traffic and parking, protection of existing employment sites, retail development, affordable housing, Gypsies and Travellers and the provision of recreation, open space and community facilities.

## **Viability**

121. The Council has commissioned independent consultants to undertake a viability assessment of the whole Local Plan and specifically on the potential for delivery of the SGO. The provisional findings of this report is that the proposed SGO development has reasonable prospects for viable delivery, in the context of the high level criteria stated in the National Planning Policy Framework.
122. A whole Plan Viability Assessment will now be completed and made available prior to the final decision to undertake the Regulation 19 consultation and submission of the Local Plan.

## **Financial Implications**

123. It should be noted that funds have been set aside in an earmarked reserve for the revenue costs of the Local Plan. This reserve continues to be closely monitored.

## **Risk Assessment**

124. The Council is continuing to pursue a process which will enable it to demonstrate it is preparing a robust and sound Plan. It is considered this, together with the Council's five year supply of housing land and continued approach to permit appropriate planning applications under the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, demonstrates a positive approach to planning for sustainable development and reduces the risk that developers will be successful at appeal regarding sites the Council considers unsuitable.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

125. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report. In particular the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) has an important role in setting the framework for future development within the Borough. It will have an impact on those who live and work in the Borough regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender or other equality group.
126. There are policies within the emerging Local Plan which will have positive impacts on some groups. The implementation of the Local Plan would help to reduce adverse impacts on the community which could result from failing to address its needs for development. No adverse impacts on equality groups have been identified in the emerging Local Plan.

## Conclusion

127. The Local Plan is based on a need to provide new homes, jobs and associated infrastructure, create attractive communities within which to live and work which include other facilities and green spaces, whilst also carefully protecting the environment, all in accordance with the NPPF and environmental law.
128. The recommended Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036) sets out the requirement for new homes and employment space and demonstrates that the Council is planning positively for the growth of the Borough over this period. This includes planning for the existing and future residents and businesses within the borough and involves the development of a Strategic Growth Option and a range of smaller sites, together with the necessary infrastructure. The Local Plan protects and mitigates appropriately for the important landscape character of the area between existing settlements and protected sites and species within the Borough.
129. The Local Plan has been informed by a range of evidence and technical background studies, together with the view of residents, businesses, local councils and a wide range of interested parties who have responded to consultation and engagement as the Local Plan has developed since 2015.
130. Although much of this technical work is complete, some of it is ongoing. Despite this the Council is confident that the initial findings support the approach taken within the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036). When the Local Plan is published for consultation it will incorporate the final findings of all the technical work and evidence. However, if the outstanding evidence does not support the approach taken then the final Plan will be changed to reflect this; and if this results in a major change to the Local Plan, it will be brought back to Council for a decision.
131. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036) will be the subject of consultation in 2018, when any interested party will have the opportunity to make written representations regarding that Plan. These representations will be considered by an independent Planning Inspector who will hold a public examination into the Local Plan. The ‘soundness’ of the Local Plan will then be considered at the examination and if it is found ‘sound’ by the Planning Inspector, the Council can proceed to adoption, provided it incorporates any ‘main modifications’ recommended by the Inspector. The Local Plan is therefore part of a robust ongoing process to consider the future development plans for the Borough.
132. This report sets out the continued progress that the Council has made to ensure we have a Local Plan that is ready for the formal public consultation and subsequent submission to the Planning Inspectorate. This will be used to inform the Secretary of State of the progress that has been made, following his recent letter advising of the potential for intervention where councils do not make sufficient progress in adopting Local Plans. The timescale for delivering the Local Plan is set out in the updated ‘Local Development Scheme’ (LDS), which is in Appendix 3.

**SAM FOX  
LOCAL PLAN ADVISOR**

Date: 30 November 2017  
Contact Officer: Sam Fox  
Tel No: 02380 683839  
e-mail: sam.fox@eastleigh.gov.uk  
Appendices Attached: 16

1. Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)
2. Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) maps
3. Local Development Scheme, December 2017
4. Community Engagement 'Shaping Your Community', Autumn 2017
5. Development Distribution Strategy and Principles (adopted December 2016)
6. List of Technical Studies
7. Housing Sites
8. Summary of Housing & Employment Trajectory
9. Strategic Growth Options
10. Countryside Gaps
11. Transport Model Technical Note
12. SGO Viability
13. Southern Damselfly Survey & Habitat Assessment Study
14. Draft Strategic Conservation Plan for Southern Damselfly
15. Addendum to Conservation Plan
16. Masterplanning Briefing Note

**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.