

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.**