



Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036



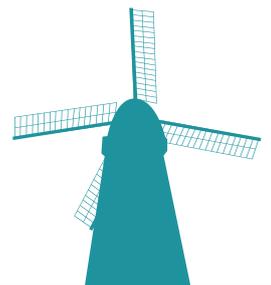
# Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

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## Strategic Growth Option Updated Delivery background paper

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October 2018



This background paper supports the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan and provides an update of background information on the delivery of the Strategic Growth Option.

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## **Part 2: Viability and Deliverability of the recommended Strategic Growth Option (SGO B/C)**

### **12. Introduction**

- 12.1 Part 1 of this background paper explains why the Council has been recommended to select Options B and C as a Strategic Growth Option (SGO) to deliver a large part of its housing development through the Local Plan. Part 2 (this section) tests whether there is a reasonable prospect of delivery of the SGO and the proposed link road. This paper covers the form of development and the associated link road; the other infrastructure required; the likely availability of private and public finances; the ability to gain planning permission and a broad discussion of the phasing issues. It should be read alongside the relevant sections of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Viability Assessment which address the SGO.

### **13. National Policy**

- 13.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF - 2012) sets out national planning policy for plan-making and decision-taking. The NPPF states that the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of garden cities (Paragraph 52). The importance of planning positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including wider area development schemes, is also stressed. Local Plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development which will be expected for the area. Planning policies should aim to ensure that developments establish a strong sense of place and create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses and support local facilities; respond to local character while not preventing or discouraging innovation; and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes (Paragraphs 57-59).
- 13.2 The NPPF states that plans should be deliverable and that careful attention should be paid to costs and viability. Sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to a scale of obligations and policy burdens which, together, threatens their viability. To ensure viability, any costs, taken with normal development costs, should not prevent a willing landowner and developer from achieving a competitive return. Policies should not put implementation of the plan at serious risk, and should facilitate development throughout the economic cycle. Where measures are required to make a development acceptable in planning terms, there should be a clear justification and options for reducing costs explored. The development should not be approved if the measures cannot be secured. There should be a

reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is delivered in a timely fashion (Paragraphs 173- 177).

## **14. Form of development**

- 14.1 Eastleigh Borough is predominantly suburban in character, but retains areas of countryside which are locally significant, mainly because of the separation they provide between settlements, but also because of their biodiversity and landscape characteristics. Due to the scale of housing and employment development required, however, and the existing relatively compact settlement pattern of the Borough, the Council has been required to consider a significant scale of new greenfield development. A review of countryside gaps has been undertaken, recommending changes where appropriate, as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- 14.2 The Council's preferred approach for new greenfield development is the creation of two new communities to the north of Bishopstoke and to the north and east of Fair Oak. Concentrating development in these locations enables whole new communities to be created with a mix of homes, jobs, services and open spaces and will secure more developer funding for transport and community facilities. This will have significant benefits for existing, as well as new, communities including: potentially easing traffic congestion; creating a new district shopping centre; providing more school places; and better health facilities. If development were dispersed it could generate the same cumulative impacts on traffic and facilities, but would not support a comprehensive approach to addressing them.
- 14.3 However, the development will inevitably have impacts. It therefore needs to be very carefully planned on a comprehensive basis as set out in the policy. This will both maximise the benefits of creating new communities; and avoid or mitigate the impacts.

## **15. The developers' Masterplan**

- 15.1 The developers' Masterplan (Strategic Site Rationale and Delivery Strategy - November 2016) covers an area of approximately 350 hectares. The existing land comprises various parcels of predominantly agricultural and grazing land. Large parts of the site do not currently have public access.
- 15.2 This document was submitted on behalf of the joint site promoters, Highwood Land and Drew Smith Group (now part of the Galliford Try Partnership). It sets out proposals for the following scale of development:
- Over 6,000 new homes with a range of dwelling mix and different tenures.
  - Strategic transport infrastructure, including a new road which would connect to the M3.
  - Over 30,000 square metres of new business and employment floorspace. (This is likely to be a combination of office and light industrial use. The

developer's Masterplan is based on delivery at a ratio of 40% site coverage).

- New primary and secondary schools, community facilities and improvements to healthcare facilities.
- New local and district centres to provide retail and other facilities within 'hub locations'. (The developers' Masterplan indicates one district centre and two smaller local centres in accessible locations within the core of the housing areas. A balance will need to be struck between providing appropriate facilities and not competing with the higher order retail centres, especially Eastleigh Town Centre).
- Sustainable travel in the form of new strategic cycle and pedestrian routes, with new and improved public transport infrastructure.

- 15.3 The proposals seek to deliver new neighbourhoods which will be distinct places and respond to the site character and context. They will also integrate into the existing settlements and reinforce their quality and vitality. Strong connections will also be made to Eastleigh Town Centre with its existing services, facilities and transport connections. Linkages to the wider countryside will also be provided.
- 15.4 To the north of Bishopstoke the aim is to deliver a new community with its own unique character derived from its location and landscape context. Development of the site will facilitate a new strategic link road, connecting Winchester Road in Fair Oak with Allbrook Way and the M3 beyond. The intention is to create a degree of self-containment with the provision of services for everyday living. The development will incorporate large areas of open space which will provide separation from surrounding communities.
- 15.5 To the north and east of Fair Oak, the vision is to deliver an urban extension which will provide improved facilities for the existing village. A new road through the site will connect Mortimers Lane to the strategic link road.
- 15.6 The developers' Green Infrastructure Strategy attempts to respond to the landscape, ecological and open space opportunities. The proposals incorporate strategic planting belts to the east and north of the site; and ecological buffers to woodlands, headwaters and watercourses. The final extent of the buffers will be given consideration as part of the evolving Masterplan for the site.
- 15.7 Over 130 hectares of public open space has been indicated, which would benefit both residents of the new development and existing residents by encouraging improved public access to areas of countryside which are currently privately owned. Of this, over 20 hectares of formal recreational open space is proposed which is likely to be shared with school use.

## 16. The Council's approach

- 16.1 The proposed SGO will consist of a strategic allocation to provide two new communities with a countryside gap between. The development will include some 5,200 - 5,300 new homes, approximately 30,000 square metres of employment floorspace; new primary schools; a new secondary school; retail and community facilities; and a new link road extending from Allbrook Hill in the west to Winchester Road in the east. The development will include a new district centre comprising retail and other facilities which will be situated to benefit both the new occupiers and the existing residents of Fair Oak. The employment floorspace will provide a mix of offices and light industrial uses (Class B1)
- 16.2 To further test the capacity of the site, and to independently assess the development, the Council commissioned its own Masterplan from Allies and Morrison. A draft Masterplan has been prepared and forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The draft Masterplan has defined an overall identity and vision for the SGO. It is not a fixed blueprint; the detailed design and layout will continue to evolve. The draft Masterplan framework sets out an emerging position to inform the strategic allocation of the SGO area and the associated policy position in the Local Plan. Once the Local Plan has been adopted, the Council intends to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the SGO area to support relevant Local Plan policies. The draft SPD will be subject to public engagement and the intention is that this will be based around the emerging Masterplan, subject to the adoption of the Local Plan SGO policy.
- 16.3 Allies and Morrison undertook a targeted review of the SGO framework in October 2018 in response to feedback from the Local Plan consultation process. The main purpose was to consider the extent of development in specific locations. This resulted in either the expansion or reduction in the extent of the buffers/developable areas in a small number of cases and revised development parcels.
- 16.4 The main features of this addendum report are: potential for additional development to the north of Option B; strengthening the Green Infrastructure links between areas of ancient woodland; potential for a 'green bridge' and a partial cutting for the link road to provide wildlife links; and a potential additional development area at the eastern end of the SGO. The report gives additional consideration to the interface between the new development and the surrounding countryside. Further guidance is provided on appropriate buffers between the new development and existing landscape features, such as hedgerows and ancient woodland. The addendum report concludes, on the basis of this additional assessment, that the potential development capacity of the SGO is approximately 5,526 new homes.
- 16.5 The Council recognises the importance of having a policy for the whole SGO area which will send a clear message to developers and other interested parties. It will demonstrate that the proposals will be considered as part of a single vision. A comprehensive policy approach will also assist with bids for funding. The Council's draft Masterplan indicates the most appropriate uses,

their location and overall provision. Integration of business floorspace alongside local centres will encourage linked trips and minimise the need to travel. There is a strong placemaking argument for the inclusion of an employment offer in close proximity to the new communities.

### Mix of dwellings

- 16.6 The development will provide a mix of housing types including affordable housing and provision for older persons housing. The objective is to create mixed and balanced communities. The type of housing delivered will be in accordance with the mix of housing identified in Policy DM26 and the levels of affordable housing in Policy DM30. Recent trends in Eastleigh show a preponderance of 3 and 4 bedroom houses being provided, with lower numbers of smaller dwellings, or those able to accommodate older persons. There will be increased demand for smaller dwellings in the future.

### Density of development

- 16.7 The density of development will ensure that effective use is made of the site, whilst achieving a high quality environment. The Masterplan indicates the density and character areas of the SGO, with lower densities likely on the fringes of the development and in the most sensitive locations. Higher densities will be directed to areas close to new and existing centres, on public transport routes, and in less sensitive landscape settings.

## **17. Transport**

- 17.1 The Eastleigh Strategic Transport Study 2015 (ESTS) defines the need for potential multi-modal strategic transport infrastructure improvements to be delivered in the Local Plan period to 2036. The ESTS 2015 identified a number of potential highway mitigation schemes which include:
- A new link road to the north of Bishopstoke between the B3354 Winchester Road and the B3335 Highbridge Road.
  - A new link road between the B3335 Allbrook Hill/Highbridge Road and the A335 Allbrook Way.
  - Junction improvements along the B3037 Bishopstoke Road corridor.
- 17.2 Traffic congestion on major roads through the borough is an issue. There is a need to give greater priority to buses, cycling and walking on key road links in the Borough as well as other actions to improve the attractions of these modes of transport.
- 17.3 The Council's transport team, in consultation with Hampshire County Council and Highways England, have considered the opportunities for a variety of highway interventions which, together with the proposed link road, would provide access to the new development and potentially ease traffic congestion in the surrounding area. The full transport modelling findings and associated Transport Assessment (TA) are summarised in section 1 of this paper and are

provided elsewhere in evidence supporting the Local Plan. The ESTS was an important starting point and has now been refined by this latest evidence. The essential concepts remain the same: to promote walking, cycling and public transport; and a new link road as per the first two points above. One strand of the latest TA is to design the junctions along the link road to maximise its effectiveness. This means the B3037 Bishopstoke Road corridor improvements are now more related to the overall need to address traffic congestion in the Borough. The TA also identifies a range of other currently planned or further junction improvements around the Borough.

#### North Bishopstoke / Fair Oak Link Road

- 17.4 The B3037 Bishopstoke Road / Fair Oak Road corridor between Eastleigh Town Centre and Fair Oak is one of the most congested corridors within the Borough and experiences high levels of westbound delay during the morning peak period and some delays both eastbound and westbound during the evening peak period. It is of strategic importance in terms of traffic movement, catering for trips originating in Bishopstoke/Fair Oak and the wider area travelling to/from Eastleigh Town Centre, Chandler's Ford and junctions 12 and 13 of the M3 as well as junction 5 of the M27.
- 17.5 The proposed North Bishopstoke / Fair Oak link road would also provide a new connection between the B3335 Highbridge Road and the B3037 Mortimers Lane east of Fair Oak, enabling traffic travelling to/from Junction 12 of the M3 to avoid the congestion on the B3037 Bishopstoke Road / Fair Oak Road corridor and Eastleigh Town Centre.
- 17.6 The link road will act as a distributor road for the development allocated as part of the SGO and for much of its length will pass through the development. It will in broad terms consist of a 7.3m wide single carriageway with 2 x 3m flanking shared use footpath / cycleways.
- 17.7 Within the development, the link road would be designed in accordance with principles set out in Manual for Streets, Manual for Streets 2, and the Companion Document to Manual for Streets produced by Hampshire County Council. Outside the development area, the links, junctions and highway features such as pedestrian and cycle routes, would be designed to meet standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges for roads with a 40mph speed limit or faster.
- 17.8 The site promoters have undertaken an appraisal of the highway situation at Allbrook, in the vicinity of the rail bridge and the crossing over the River Itchen. This looked at firstly, existing and proposed conditions for non-motorised users taking into account demand from the SGO; and secondly, the alignment clearances at the rail bridge and existing and future HGV traffic volumes in Allbrook.
- 17.9 The existing pedestrian demand under Allbrook Railway Bridge is low and future development of the SGO is unlikely to increase pedestrian movement under the bridge.

- 17.10 As part of the development the existing road alignment to the east of the rail bridge would be straightened and the carriageway widened. The increase in lane width would provide an improved offset from pedestrians using the footway. The straightening of the road would also allow for improved visibility along Highbridge Road as the current alignment restricts visibility through the bridge. The proposed realignment of Highbridge Road will help in the context of increased traffic flows associated with future development and provide improvements for HGV's using this route.
- 17.11 In order to mitigate the potential for bridge strikes by tall vehicles, a change to the vertical alignment within the bridge is proposed to improve clearances, coupled with the erection of further warning signs on the approach to the bridge, potentially activated by taller vehicles.

### Allbrook Hill Relief Road

- 17.12 The proposed Allbrook Hill Relief Road would provide a new connection between the A335 Allbrook Way and the B3335 Highbridge Road, enabling traffic travelling to/from Junction 12 of the M3 to avoid Allbrook Hill. Addressing congestion and highway safety issues along Allbrook Hill has been a longstanding aspiration of both EBC and HCC. The road is currently narrow and the prevalence of on-street parking together with restricted forward visibility along the road results in vehicle conflicts and prevents the free flow of two-way traffic.
- 17.13 In order to avoid a traffic queue extending back under the railway bridge which may complicate issues for high sided vehicles attempting to pass each other at this constrained location, a revised junction design will be required to connect the Allbrook Hill Relief Road with Highbridge Road, Allbrook Hill and Pitmore Lane. The new junction would prioritise through east-west traffic using the North Bishopstoke Link Road and Allbrook Hill Relief Road, and would remove all through traffic from Allbrook Hill (or alternatively just maintain a one way local connection).

### Cost of highway improvements

- 17.14 The estimated cost of the Allbrook Relief Road, Highbridge Road improvements and the North Bishopstoke Link Road to Mortimers Lane, is in the region of £47 million. This is based on cost estimates produced by Hampshire County Council in 2016 as part of the Eastleigh Strategic Transport Study North Bishopstoke Bypass Feasibility Report.
- 17.15 The HCC report included detailed costings for the civil engineering elements for the Allbrook Relief Road, the Highbridge Road improvements and the North Bishopstoke Link Road to Winchester Road only. Costs were provided for each of the following:
- Site clearance
  - Fencing and barriers
  - Drainage and ducts

- Earthworks
- Pavements
- Kerbs, footways and paved areas,
- Traffic signs and road markings
- Structures (Highbridge Road and Link Road only)
- Special elements
- Preliminaries and temporary work

Also included was a 15% contingency on the cost of the civils, 2.6% on landscaping and 23.5% on fees, supervision, support and investigations. An allowance has also been made for risks identified in the risk register (including inflation and utilities) and the standard 44% has been added for optimism bias. The function of optimism bias adjustments is to confirm that the economic case remains robust if historically observed cost overruns were to be repeated and are most applicable when the cost estimate is immature i.e. when there are significant elements of the project that are not defined or understood. Table 8 of the Department for Transport's WebTAG's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) Unit A1.2 (July 2017) advises a 44% optimism bias for local roads at an early stage in the process.

- 17.16 It should be noted that this study only considered the North Bishopstoke Link Road to the proposed junction with the B3354 Winchester Road. The indicative cost of the stretch of the North Bishopstoke Link Road linking Winchester Road with Mortimers Lane was calculated by applying the pro-rated cost of the civils for the 3.1km section of the North Bishopstoke Bypass to Winchester Road to the 1.9km extension to Mortimers Lane. An additional £85,000 was included to cover the cost of the proposed signalised junction on Winchester Road. The same percentage allowance for contingency, landscaping, fees, risks and optimum bias as used in the HCC report was applied to the extension to Mortimers Lane.
- 17.17 The HCC report included detailed costs for a number of different route alignments, with an allowance for risk calculated only for the preferred routes. In calculating the indicative cost of the route now proposed by EBC, HCC's preferred route has been used in all cases with the exception of the improvements to Highbridge Road where Option H4, which provides a smoother alignment but requires a new bridge crossing over the River Itchen is now the preferred option. For the purposes of this exercise, the same percentage allowances have been used for contingency, landscaping, fees etc. as have been applied to the rest of the link road. It has also been assumed that the allowance for risk is the same as calculated for HCC's preferred route for Highbridge Road.

17.18 The detailed indicative cost breakdown for the individual sections of the road is as set out in the table below:

	Allbrook Hill Relief Road	Highbridge Road	NBLR to Winchester Road	NBLR Winchester Road to Mortimers Lane	<b>Total</b>
Civils	£2,222,504	£2,340,208	£8,534,473	£5,230,806	<b>£18,327,991</b>
Civils Contingency	£333,376	£351,031	£1,280,171	£784,621	<b>£2,749,199</b>
Intelligent Transport Systems	0	0	£85,000	£85,000	<b>£170,000</b>
Landscaping	£57,785	£60,845	£221,896	£136,001	<b>£476,527</b>
Fees, Supervision, Support, Investigations	£761,438	£726,225	£2,943,918	£1,809,748	<b>£6,241,329</b>
Land – not included	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Risk Register (incl utilities and inflation)	£626,498	£338,233	£2,405,769	£1,464,626	<b>£4,835,126</b>
Optimism Bias	£1,760,705	£1,679,279	£6,807,340	£4,184,753	<b>£14,432,077</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,762,306</b>	<b>£5,495,821</b>	<b>£22,287,567</b>	<b>£13,695,555</b>	<b>£47,241,249</b>

### M3 Junction 12

17.19 The existing highway network surrounding the M3 Junction 12 is currently operating over capacity with long queues developing in peak hours. Consultants were commissioned by Hampshire County Council to consider what improvements are required to mitigate the impact of additional traffic resulting from Local Plan development. Four junctions were assessed connecting the two existing bridges spanning the M3. This resulted in six development options to determine the most efficient and cost effective mitigation measures.

17.20 The favoured option would involve signalisation of junctions, widening of approaches on all arms of junctions and widening of exits to two lanes. This

option would also require carriageway widening on both of the bridges over the M3. The findings of the report were that queues would be reduced to acceptable levels at all four junctions with no traffic blocking back to the M3. Further specific and focussed assessment is being undertaken, particularly on carriageway widening to the two motorway overbridges. The Council is continuing to work with the highway authorities on these specific areas. It is therefore not possible at this stage to give a complete cost for these works.

### Public Transport

- 17.21 In the absence of any potential for the provision of a rail service, bus services will need to form the main component of a public transport strategy.
- 17.22 Bus services have the advantage of being more flexible in how they can be routed. The Council's transport team have carried out an assessment of the feasibility/viability of options for bus services. This assessment has been based on the premise that any new bus services will, in the long term, need to be financially self-supporting (as is the case for the large majority of bus services in the Borough today).
- 17.23 These estimates indicate that 30 minute and possibly 20 minute frequency bus links to Eastleigh could be viable from this site. Extending an Eastleigh only link to start from West Horton/Firtree Lane would only marginally improve viability. There are a variety of possible ways that a North Bishopstoke/NE Fair Oak to Eastleigh service could be extended to Southampton. However, these estimates indicate that all options have substantial gaps between the cost of operation and the level of patronage/income they would be likely to generate from the new development. There may be opportunities to "bridge" some of this gap through serving new markets within Eastleigh, and by adding in the benefits of additional trips, such as education trips to Eastleigh College.
- 17.24 These estimates indicate that anything other than an additional hourly link between this proposed development site and Winchester would be unlikely to be viable; however in combination with the existing 69 route this could give a half hourly service to Winchester from some parts of the site. Extension of a Winchester link to West Horton/Firtree Lane is estimated to slightly improve viability of this service, whereas further extension as far south as Hedge End would appear to worsen the viability of the service.
- 17.25 Overall, it appears that there is a good likelihood of a reasonably attractive level of service to Eastleigh, and perhaps on to Southampton from this site, being viable, together with an acceptable level of service to Winchester.
- 17.26 It is likely that all of the above would need some kick-start funding initially, so that services are in place early in the development to maximise their potential. However, it looks like there is a reasonable likelihood of them being commercially viable in the longer run provided they pick up some new markets from places "down route" from the SGO site. The demand from the SGO site itself would not be able to make these services viable on their own (although the larger the number of units the better), but the gap between vehicle requirement and estimated patronage is generally of a scale where it

is considered that other places served by the routes would be able to fill the gaps.

## **18. Ecology**

- 18.1 The River Itchen is designated as a Special Area of Conservation for a number of species, including the southern damselfly and bullhead (primary reasons for site selection) and white-clawed crayfish, brook lamprey, Atlantic salmon and otter (present as qualifying features).
- 18.2 A new river crossing in Highbridge Road could result in significant environmental impacts on the SAC, protected species and wider biodiversity. The impact of any land take and changes in drainage (including flood risk), water quality and flows on the SAC, SSSI and adjacent habitats that support protected species such as southern damselfly, water vole and otter therefore needs to be assessed. The Environment Agency's preference in relation to new bridge structures is for a clear span and ideally a soffit level of at least 600mm above the designed flood level. The existing bridge acts as a restriction so any betterment that a new bridge can provide is preferred. The site promoters have assessed various options for a new bridge structure crossing the River Itchen. Their preferred option would meet the standard of the Environment Agency set out above.
- 18.3 Issues of fish passage in, and the provision of adequate undeveloped buffer zones adjacent to, the Bow Lake stream would need to be addressed as part of any future road and housing development. More work on road drainage and its direct and indirect impacts, including an understanding of any existing pollution pathways, on the sensitive habitats and species of the Itchen, Bow Lake and other watercourses will be required. (The Environment Agency does not support the culverting of watercourses).
- 18.4 Further assessment of the impact of the link road on the qualifying features of the River Itchen SAC has been undertaken as part of the Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan. The HRA concludes that, subject to mitigation measures, there will be no adverse impact on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC. Future planning applications for the SGO and link road will be required to undertake project-level HRA to show that the devised mitigation measures are capable of preventing adverse effects on integrity.
- 18.5 The site promoters have undertaken an ecological assessment including bat surveys. These surveys suggest that the area is important to a range of woodland and other bat species and supports some significant populations. With a range of appropriate mitigation measures, including buffering, it would be possible to mitigate the potential effects of the development on these bat populations.
- 18.6 The only qualifying species that is considered to be susceptible in practice to changes in nitrogen deposition from atmosphere is the southern damselfly as it utilises riparian habitats out of the water column which could be deterred from utilising an area by a relatively subtle change in vegetation and species composition. However, as the River Itchen is phosphorous-limited,

phosphorous availability is the factor which ultimately controls vegetation response to other nutrients. Moreover, the fen vegetation within the flood plain of the River Itchen can all be classed as Rich Fen and this is less vulnerable to nitrogen enrichment than other fen vegetation.

### Southern damselfly

- 18.7 The southern damselfly is one of Europe's and Britain's rarest and most threatened damselflies. As a consequence of its global and national decline, southern damselfly are protected under European and national legislation. They are listed under the European Council Directive transposed into UK legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The southern damselfly is listed as an Annex II species that is present and a primary reason for selection of the River Itchen as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The decline of southern damselfly in the UK and Hampshire is believed to be a consequence of the loss and degradation of suitable habitats as a result of under-management, over-management, abstraction, inappropriate water level management and potentially pollution. This has resulted in the increasing isolation and fragmentation of suitable sites, a breakdown in meta-population dynamics, and an increased susceptibility of remaining populations to extinction, particularly from localised pollution events and nutrient enrichment.
- 18.8 To understand more about the existing situation, the Council commissioned specialist consultants to survey existing habitats in the River Itchen and prepare a Strategic Conservation Plan. The consultants investigated the current and potential future distribution of southern damselfly within and adjacent to the Borough boundary with Winchester City Council. The work undertaken in summer/autumn 2017 was in two sequential phases. Phase 1 involved the completion of surveys and habitats assessments for southern damselfly at known and potential sites throughout the Borough. This study focussed on sites in and near the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC), in particular where the watercourses associated with the floodplain meadows, are known to support a nationally important population of these species. The study found three key habitat specific factors currently limiting southern damselfly distribution in the area: the development of scrub; water security and management; and land management. The survey of southern damselfly was updated in 2018.
- 18.9 Phase 2 of the study involved more detailed consideration of the findings of the survey and habitat assessment programme in order to develop a Strategic Conservation Plan for southern damselfly across the study area. Specifically, potential habitat enhancement and creation opportunities were identified based on the results of the habitat assessment with their strategic value assessed based on their potential influence on the strength and location of existing southern damselfly populations.
- 18.10 Based on the transport modelling and other evidence, the Council's environmental consultants have concluded that (with mitigation) there will be no likely significant effect on the integrity of the SAC. Appropriate mitigation measures which may be required in order to negate or reduce any adverse

impacts that might otherwise arise have been considered in detail. Opportunities for enhancement have also been considered. The phase 2 report provides a summary of the habitat enhancement and creation opportunities identified but does not purport to provide a detailed analysis of delivery. Rather, the extent of any mitigation measures required to negate or reduce any adverse impact on the integrity of the SAC and the deliverability of this mitigation have been considered as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment. In terms of habitat enhancement opportunities, 43 transects over 10 sites were assessed. Of these it was considered that habitat enhancement proposals for 7 or 8 transects would have a high and moderate potential of being deliverable. In addition, 16 habitat creation opportunities were identified over 9 sites. It was concluded that proposals for some of these areas have a high and moderate potential of being delivered respectively.

- 18.11 The study concludes that it is fundamentally important that these sites are considered in combination rather than in isolation. The conservation strategy therefore focuses upon the delivery of a suite of proposals that would effectively consolidate and strengthen the population of the southern damselfly in the Lower Itchen Valley. This has informed the Habitat Regulations Assessment approach to mitigation which sets out those measures which are specifically required in association with the new Local Plan development.

#### Hydrology and flood risk

- 18.12 The Council commissioned specialist technical advice on the hydrological sensitivity of the proposals for the SGO including the North Bishopstoke Link Road. The study investigated the proposed replacement of the bridge over the River Itchen and the new road realignment with regard to flood risk. The report concludes that the risk of flooding from surface water sources to the bridge and road realignment is considered to be low. The existing bridge crossing is not currently surcharging, i.e. water is not reaching the soffit level of the existing structure. The site promoters have assessed various options for a new bridge structure crossing the River Itchen. The soffit level of the preferred option would be slightly higher than the existing structure and would be above the 1 in 100 year maximum water level in the river channel. The proposed structure is therefore likely to have a negligible impact on flood water levels. Once detailed design of the bridge has been completed, further hydraulic modelling should be conducted to confirm that the structure will not impact on flood risk at the site.
- 18.13 The report included a number of recommendations in relation to water management and surface water runoff management to mitigate as much as practicable, the impacts of the SGO development on the natural water environment. These include among other things:
- Locating the development outside the predicted 1000-year flood extents to mitigate against floodplain storage loss; any development within the floodplain will require provision of a 'level' for 'level' compensation scheme.

- Retention of existing watercourses as open channels throughout the development and restoring/opening up existing culverts where possible
- Designing road routes and crossings with clear span bridges with sufficient safety allowance to accommodate design flood events
- Provision of a 20m buffer (minimum) to all affected headwaters and an 8m strip along affected watercourses
- Incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) across the development, with SuDS features positioned outside the 1000-year floodplain
- Managing run-off to include natural catchment boundaries

## **19. Infrastructure**

- 19.1 None of the infrastructure providers who responded to previous consultation has stated that there are any absolute constraints on development of the SGO. The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- 19.2 As a greenfield site, the SGO will require significant investment in transport infrastructure, a large part of which is a result of travel demand generated by the development. This includes infrastructure both inside and outside the area. It is therefore appropriate that much of the cost should be borne by the developer. In order to provide access to the development a new east-west link road would be constructed which would connect to the M3. Further investigations are being undertaken into necessary alterations to Junction 12 of the M3. Footpaths, cycleways and bridleways will need to link the development to woodlands etc and adjoining settlements.

### Education

- 19.3 The Masterplan makes provision for new schools, currently considered to be three new primary schools and one new secondary school. The phased delivery of the schools will be an important consideration. The new schools will need to be in accessible locations within walking distance of new homes and alongside local centres and other community facilities. Hampshire County Council has advised there is very limited capacity in existing schools. Based on the published HCC guidance, there would be a child yield of 0.3 (primary) and 0.21 (secondary) for eligible dwellings of two bedrooms plus. On the assumption that the SGO could accommodate approximately 5,200 homes this generates 6.7 forms of entry of primary and 6.6 forms of entry of secondary provision. The education authority considers the development should incorporate three x 3 form entry primary schools, allowing for future proofing of capacity. One secondary school would be required. It will be important that one of the primary schools is available as part of an early phase of development.

## Drainage

- 19.4 Southern Water has previously commented that new and improved sewerage infrastructure as well as water mains would be required. In principle, this is not considered to be a constraint to development but the necessary infrastructure would need to be planned and delivered in parallel with development. The south-east region is an area of water stress, so Southern Water and the Environment Agency support the option of seeking higher standards of water efficiency than minimum building regulation requirements.
- 19.5 Surface water drainage will be sustainably managed through SuDS features across the development, including open water features such as swales and attenuation ponds. A drainage strategy will need to be developed as part of the hydrological assessment work being undertaken. All planning applications will need to be accompanied by detailed flood risk assessments.

## Viability

- 19.6 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. An addendum report in October 2018 tested additional scenarios. The core finding of the viability work is that the proposed SGO development has reasonable prospects for viable delivery (i.e. without the need for gap funding), in the context of the high level criteria stated in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Public funding.

- 19.7 The Government introduced the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) in July 2017. The HIF is currently in two parts: the Marginal Viability Fund; and Forward Funding. The Marginal Viability Fund is intended for schemes which are well advanced, typically with planning permission in place and the majority of funding already secured or identified. The fund is aimed at single and lower tier authorities, with bids capped at £10 million. The Forward Funding source is aimed at a small number of strategic and high-impact infrastructure schemes. It seeks to provide early stage funding to give the market confidence to provide further investment. This fund has only been made available to upper tier authorities and the authority must have an adopted up to date plan or one submitted for examination. Although the date for submitted bids has passed, it is probable that similar funding will be available in the future given the Government's priority of increasing house building.
- 19.8 The Government has recently announced alterations to the structure of funding for transport developments with the publication of the DfT's Transport Investment Strategy (July 2017). The road investment strategy is to be informed by a structured, comprehensive programme of engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships and closer working with local planning authorities. The funding landscape is likely to involve more competitive bidding to a range of fund holders. In this area, this will involve bids to the Solent LEP.

- 19.9 Whilst specific funding programmes may evolve, in general terms it is considered there is likely to be a range of potential public funding sources, for example: housing delivery, transport and school place funding. If needed, this would help unlock strategically significant growth in the shape of the SGO. Eastleigh Borough Council has a proven record of pro-active involvement in joint ventures to secure housing delivery. In delivering the SGO, the Council will consider a range of measures to ensure the development is brought forward in a timely fashion.
- 19.10 The Council has decided not to take forward the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) alongside the Local Plan. Although an area specific CIL charging schedule would be one future option for delivering infrastructure, the main risk with this approach is that market conditions could delay a particular scheme coming forward. This would result in a shortfall in funding to cover works either carried out or planned that could not subsequently be delivered. It is anticipated, therefore, that the key strategic scale infrastructure would be largely funded by the development in lieu of CIL. Affordable housing and site specific requirements would continue to be funded through Section 106 agreements.

#### Land control/phasing issues

- 19.11 It is the Council's intention that the development will be designed and planned comprehensively to create a high quality place with the timely provision of infrastructure. The joint site promoters are established developers with extensive experience of the local market. The land controlled by the site promoters is extensive and sufficiently within their control for the Council to have confidence over the comprehensive delivery of the SGO development. It is anticipated that elements of the development will be delivered by the Highwood Group and Galliford Try in partnership with other developers, including affordable housing providers.
- 19.12 The large scale of this development means it is likely to come forward in a number of phases through separate planning applications. However, it is important that the development is planned on a comprehensive basis. Phases of the development will make timely provision for transport, community, environmental and other necessary infrastructure and measures.
- 19.13 The planning policy for the site is flexibly worded to allow for changes in circumstances, but it will be important that a Masterplan and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) are in place prior to development commencing on site. The policy would allow for developers to bring forward development parcels on a flexible basis. Doing so may improve the delivery rate in real terms whilst creating more competition between developers and offering a better choice for homebuyers.
- 19.14 These documents will set out parameters and issues to be resolved by subsequent planning applications. The Masterplan should be sufficiently detailed and subject to public consultation. It will set out the quantum, type of development and include infrastructure and a phasing plan. It will provide

guidance on character areas, landscape strategy, access and connectivity and design principles to be followed by applications.

19.15 The IDP will sit alongside a Masterplan for the whole site. The IDP will establish the quantum and type of infrastructure to be provided and especially how and when that infrastructure will be funded and delivered. This will be central to the delivery of this strategic site via more than one planning application.

19.16 Infrastructure on this development will include:

- New roads;
- New education facilities and new or expanded healthcare facilities (discussions needed with relevant commissioning body but likely to be in the form of a contribution to expand existing facilities);
- Public transport integration/funding of services;
- Local centres including retail and community uses;
- Cycle/walking facilities;
- Green infrastructure;
- Ecological enhancements (impact on the SAC - significant areas of land are within the control of the site promoters which could be made available for conservation management/mitigation).

19.17 The IDP will contain a sequence of works where the phased delivery of infrastructure and housing is set out. It will be crucial that each phase of the development contributes to, or delivers, components of the strategic infrastructure. It will need to identify which types of infrastructure are strategic and those which can be dealt with by development phase.

19.18 There is a good argument for the new schools being brought forward at an early stage as an attraction for new residents. In practice, the schools will be provided as and when required to be agreed as part of the planning application process. It is likely that dual use of the schools will allow for community facilities to be provided as a shared facility.

19.19 Legal agreements will need to be framed in the context of the IDP.

19.20 In terms of deliverability there will need to be multiple sales outlets to maintain a deliverable supply of housing. It is probable that the lead developer will dispose of land parcels on a phased basis to residential developers. The technical assumption is that 3,350 dwellings will be delivered through the SGO during the plan period. This figure of 3,350 assumes that for the main development, the first dwellings will be completed in 2024/25 (with only the 250 dwellings at Pembers Hill Farm being delivered in the medium term at a nominal rate of 50 dwellings per year); and then an annual delivery rate of 258

dwellings per year. This figure is derived from studies of large scale development elsewhere as outlined in a separate background paper. It is applied consistently across the plan period although it is recognised that, in reality, delivery will be lower in the early years and will vary year on year. Assuming this average annual rate of development and a total capacity of 5,200 dwellings, the SGO would be complete by approximately 2044. The Council continues to take actions and work with Government and other agencies to accelerate the delivery of new homes.

- 19.21 The area covered by each outline/full planning application will be sufficiently large to ensure each phase contributes to the effective 'place making' of the overall Strategic Growth Option (SGO).
- 19.22 The first planning application will be subject to the approval by the Borough Council of a detailed Masterplan (including design codes) for the whole area covered by this policy. This will also include an IDP which will set out the appropriate timing of the provision of the infrastructure, facilities and measures specified below, alongside phases of the development.
- 19.23 Development will support and not prejudice the delivery of the full link road as set out in Policy S6. All phases of development will make a proportionate financial contribution to the link road. No development will be permitted until the link road (or at least phases 1-3) has full planning permission; and there is at least a strong likelihood that the full road will be delivered (e.g. in terms of land ownership and financial viability). Phases of development will not be occupied until phases of the link road are completed, as determined by the IDP.

## **20. Other environmental issues**

### Noise attenuation

- 20.1 The developers have commissioned a Noise Assessment which considers the likely noise effects from road traffic on existing residential receptors and on the South Downs National Park. The Noise Assessment is based on the assumption of up to 20,000 vehicles per day using the new access road. This is considered to be a worst case scenario with respect to future traffic flows.
- 20.2 The Noise Assessment concludes that the new road will not result in significant adverse effects on existing residents. Mitigation measures will be required in some cases. Further details on specific noise attenuation measures will be developed in conjunction with future planning applications.

### Air quality

- 20.3 The Council has commissioned an air quality assessment (the results of which are outlined in the SGO background paper part 1) and more detailed assessments will be carried out as part of the planning application process.

## Heritage

- 20.4 None of the land covered by the proposed SGO is within a Conservation Area. The nearest Conservation Area is in Bishopstoke, which would not be directly affected by the proposed development.
- 20.5 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the site, nor does it include a statutory Registered Park and Garden.
- 20.6 There is a non-designated locally registered historic park and garden as set out in Section 1 'other environmental' section, and the Masterplan has been informed by the assessment of this.
- 20.7 There are some listed buildings, mostly farm buildings, and due regard must be had to their setting and to ensure they are sensitively integrated into the development.
- 20.8 There are further designated and un-designated heritage assets near the boundaries of the potential site allocation. It is not considered that the setting of these heritage assets would act as a barrier to development subject to further masterplanning and mitigation measures.

## Archaeology

- 20.9 The site promoters have undertaken a desk based appraisal. This concludes that the potential for in-situ archaeological deposits across the proposed allocation area is medium to high. However, it is not considered that the archaeological potential is sufficient to act as a barrier to development, though any development will need to be considered carefully in terms of archaeological impact.

## Landscape Impact

- 20.10 The site promoters have commissioned a Landscape Appraisal of the proposed link road. This document sets out details of the proposed link road, appraises its key landscape and visual sensitivities and proposes various landscape mitigation options to minimise its impact, particularly where the road will cross open countryside.

## Minerals

- 20.11 The Council's approach is that development should not proceed until the appropriate prior extraction of minerals has taken place. Subject to amenity and environmental considerations, the preferred approach will be for any minerals to be extracted and used on site as part of the construction of the development.
- 20.12 The site promoters have carried out a Minerals Safeguarding Appraisal as a significant proportion of the land coincides with the Mineral Consultation Area identified by Hampshire County Council. The minerals in question are soft sand and gravel. This is a desk based review, identifying potential constraints for future mineral working and sets a strategy for the planning application

stage. The appraisal includes an analysis of historic boreholes which identified the most consistent recording of sand and gravel at depth in locations close to the north-west and south-west of the proposed site allocation, consistent with the River Itchen and its tributaries. There are shallower depths recorded in the eastern part of the proposed site allocation. The quality of the deposits is not known. The initial analysis suggests that the combination of environmental and ecological designations of the River Itchen Valley would act as a significant constraint to any mineral working. Further investigations will be required as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment required for a planning application.

## **21. Conclusion**

- 21.1 This document looks at the viability and deliverability of the Council's recommended Strategic Growth Option. It should be read alongside the relevant sections of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Viability Assessment which address the SGO. This paper concludes that there is a reasonable prospect of delivery of the SGO based on a range of land ownership, transport, ecological and other environmental considerations which are addressed elsewhere in evidence to support the Local Plan.

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