

# Forest Heath District Council

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

## Report of the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport

**LOCAL PLAN  
WORKING GROUP**

**4 JULY 2013**

**LOP13/007**

### **CORE STRATEGY SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW - RESPONSES TO REPRESENTATIONS**

#### **1. Summary and reasons for recommendation**

- 1.1 This report considers the responses of Officers to the representations received during the consultation period for the Single Issue Review, (SIR), 'Issues and Options' Local Plan document held between 31 July 2012 and 25 September 2012 and outlines the timetable for the next round of consultation on the 'Proposed Submission' version of this document.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Working Group resolves to agree the responses of Officers to the representations received during the Single Issue Review 'Issues and Options' consultation (attached as Appendix A) which will be used in the preparation of the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy Single Issue Review – Housing Policy.**

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### **3. Corporate priorities**

- 3.1 The SIR relates to a number of corporate priorities including housing, community development, the environment and economic development.

### **4. Key issues**

- 4.1 The SIR document considered three hypothetical or potential scenarios for establishing housing requirement(s) and sought opinion on each. The document also sought opinion on whether the overall level of growth and within each of the settlements, (including phasing), as identified within 'original' Core Strategy Policy CS7, (adopted May 2010), remained appropriate, (i.e. whether the level of growth was 'about right' or whether there should be more or less growth allocated to the settlement). Finally, the document sought opinion on the plan period.
- 4.2 In August and September 2012, a series of public exhibitions were held in Mildenhall, Brandon and Newmarket with approximately 300 people attending. 87 individuals made formal representations raising some 230 issues and these are summarised in the public participation report, (attached), along with our responses to these representations. Officers have identified 'actions' arising from these representations to be addressed at the next stage, (i.e. in the drafting of the 'Proposed Submission' version of the SIR document).
- 4.3 In October 2012, Analytics Cambridge provided Forest Heath with up to date evidence that informed the consultation version of the SIR and assessed the validity of the East of England Plan figures moving forward, with regard to more recent trends in the economy, population and housing. Their over-arching conclusion is that the range of forecast future house building for Forest Heath, from existing policies, forecasts and projections, lies between 340 to 410 dwellings per year. Further, a more recent technical report, 'Population, Housing and Employment Forecasts', produced collaboratively by Local Authorities within the Cambridge Housing Market Area (which includes Forest Heath), identified a dwelling requirement for the district of 7,000 in the period 2011 to 2031 or 350 per annum. These figures can be compared with the East of England Plan Review, (2010), 'Option 1', requirement of 340 dwellings per annum in the period 2011-2031.
- 4.4 Following abolition of the East of England Plan, (RSS), in January 2013 and the 'top-down' housing targets contained therein, Officers consider that the Analytics Cambridge and Technical Report constitute objective assessments of housing need and, as a consequence, can be used to inform the identification of an appropriately evidenced housing requirement for the District. The overall distribution of growth must continue to accord, broadly speaking, with retained Policy CS1, (Spatial Strategy), although the precise settlement allocations and phasing of delivery may change, as a consequence of, for example, our consultations and/or environmental/other constraints.
- 4.5 Following consideration of representations made to the SIR Issues and Options consultation, Officers will begin to prepare the 'Proposed Submission' version of the Local Plan document in readiness for a period of public consultation in November of this year, (in tandem with the 'Further Issues and Options' consultation on the Site Allocations Local Plan document). Following this, it is anticipated that the SIR document will be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2014, Examined in Public, (EiP), in June 2014 with adoption in November 2014.

## **5. Other options considered**

- 5.1 The SIR document considered three hypothetical or potential scenarios for establishing housing requirement(s) and sought opinion on each as outlined above.

## **6. Community impact**

- 6.1 The intention of our housing policies is the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes, to widen opportunities for home ownership and to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

## **7. Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

- 7.1 The preparation and development of the SIR is an iterative process. Although previous rounds of consultation have not been undertaken on the SIR document itself, the Core Strategy, of which it will form part, was subject to consultation in 2005, 2006, 2008, and again in 2009.

## **8. Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

- 8.1 The SIR document's preparation can be delivered within the planning service budget for 2013/2014

## **9. Risk/opportunity assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

- 9.1 Failure to proceed with the document's preparation through to adoption will leave the Authority with an incomplete Core Strategy, leading to less control over development across the district.

## **10. Legal and policy implications**

- 10.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, (2004), requires Forest Heath District Council to prepare and keep an up-to-date Development Plan. A Development Plan is essential for the continuation of an effective planning service.

## **11. Ward(s) affected**

- 11.1 All wards are affected by the provisions of the SIR.

## **12. Background papers**

- 12.1 None.

## **13. Documents attached**

- 13.1 Appendix A: Core Strategy Policy CS7 Single Issue Review 'Issues and Options' Public Participation Report.