

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is 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

LOP13/009

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SUB-REGION STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT, TECHNICAL REPORT AND MEMORANDUM OF CO-OPERATION (Key Decision Reference: SEP13/06)

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of housing needs in their 'housing market area'. For St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, the market area is the Cambridge Sub-region, which comprises the Cambridgeshire districts and the West Suffolk local authorities.
- 1.2 The local authorities in the Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing market Area have been working together to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the area as well as a supporting Technical Report and have prepared a Memorandum of Co-operation. The latter addresses the Duty to Co-operate requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Working Group resolves to recommend to Cabinet that:

- 1. The content of the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment update (attached as Appendix A) and Population, Housing and Employment Forecasts: Technical Report (Appendix B) are noted; and**
- 2. The Council agrees to the position as set out in the Memorandum of Co-operation (attached as Appendix C) in line with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the Duty to Co-operate.**

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3. Corporate priorities

- 3.1 The Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Technical Report and Memorandum of Co-Operation relate to the corporate priority Housing.

4. Key issues

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of housing needs in their 'housing market area'. It states that local plans should meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the Framework.
- 4.2 For St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, the housing market area is the Cambridge Sub-region, which comprises the Cambridgeshire districts and the West Suffolk local authorities. The districts have previously worked in collaboration to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which was used as supportive evidence in preparing the Forest Heath Core Strategy and St Edmundsbury Core Strategy.
- 4.3 The NPPF places greater emphasis on collaborative work as required by the Localism Act and the Duty to Co-operate. This is more so since the abolition of regional spatial strategies which has placed a requirement on local planning authorities to work together to assess future housing need.
- 4.4 The local authorities have worked together to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and, in particular, producing a new chapter 12 of the Assessment (Forecasts for homes of all tenures). The latest chapter is attached as Appendix A of this paper. Due to its historic and functional ties with Cambridgeshire, plus its own housing market area overlapping with the Cambridge Housing Market Area, Peterborough City Council has also collaborated on this work with the other local authorities.
- 4.5 The latest SHMA chapter identifies the scale and mix of housing needed across the area by 2031 (and extending to 2036 for Huntingdonshire to meet its proposed local plan end date). The outcome of this work is that an additional 93,000 homes are forecast to be needed across the housing market area between 2011 and 2031. The evidence to support this figure is laid out within a

Population, Housing and Employment Forecasts: Technical Report, attached as Appendix B of this paper.

- 4.6 The results indicate that an additional 93,000 homes are forecast to be needed across the housing market area between 2011 and 2031 as set out below:

	Objectively assessed need 2011 to 2031
Cambridge	14,000
East Cambridgeshire	13,000
Fenland	12,000
Huntingdonshire	17,000 (21,000 to 2036)
South Cambridgeshire	19,000
Cambridgeshire	75,000
Forest Heath	7,000
St Edmundsbury	11,000
Housing sub-region	93,000

- 4.7 A Joint Cambridgeshire Member Group met in May to consider the outcome of the work to which Members from St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath were invited. While this Joint Member Group has no formal decision-making powers, it is an appropriate body to endorse collectively the co-operation that has taken place between authorities. It will be for individual authorities including Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to determine housing targets in their local plans, taking account of the requirements of national policy and local circumstances.
- 4.8 The Joint Member Group has also recommended that local authorities in the housing market area sign up to a Memorandum of Co-operation, attached as Appendix C, which demonstrates that each local authority has collaborated in assessing the future housing needs and agreeing the distribution of future housing. This would demonstrate to a Planning Inspector examining local plan documents, such as the Forest Heath Core Strategy Single Issue Review, that the local authorities have complied with the Duty to Co-operate.
- 4.9 The conclusion, in so far as Forest Heath is concerned, notes that there is a need for 7,000 additional homes in the district between 2011 and 2031 (350 dwellings per annum). The Council's overall housing need within the former East of England Plan is 6,400 homes in the district between 2001 and 2021 (320 dwellings per year). However, as at 1st April 2009 a total of 1,935 homes had been delivered in the District (an average of 242 dwellings per annum) and in order to meet the additional homes required, an additional 4,465 additional homes are required (370 dwellings per annum). The updated evidence compared with the former East of England Plan requirements amounts to a reduction in the overall housing need for Forest Heath of 30 dwellings per annum.
- 4.10 The SHMA forecasts and Technical report are considered a sound evidence base, to enable the Council to progress with the Core Strategy Single Issue Review:

Housing Policy with an overall housing requirement for Forest Heath of 7,000 additional homes in the district between 2011 and 2031 (350 dwellings per annum). It should be noted that, in many of the other districts in the housing market area the requirement is considerably higher than was set out in the East of England Plan. Forecasts will continue to be produced on a regular basis during the period to 2031 when, should a significant change emerge; local plan policies can be reviewed.

- 4.11 In conclusion, the updated housing forecasts provide up-to-date evidence to support the Core Strategy Single Issue Review – Housing Policy. Furthermore, the collaborative work between districts in the housing market area ensures that a consistent methodology has been used to calculate need in the wider area.

5. Other options considered

- 5.1 None.

6. Community impact

6.1 Crime and disorder impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

- 6.1.1 It is not considered that the content of this paper will have any impact on crime and disorder in the district.

6.2 Diversity and equality impact *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

- 6.2.1 It is not considered that the content of this paper will have any detrimental impact on diversity and equality in the district.

6.3 Sustainability impact *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

- 6.3.1 The supporting papers do not require a sustainability appraisal. Although the Core Strategy Single Issue Review is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.

6.4 Other impact *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

- 6.4.1 None associated with this report.

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

- 7.1 The content of the SHMA and supporting papers have been the subject of collaborative working across the housing market area. This has resulted in the preparation of the Memorandum of Co-operation attached as Appendix C.

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

- 8.1 There are no additional financial or resource implications resulting from the recommendation in this paper.

- 9. Risk/opportunity assessment** (*potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives*)
- 9.1 Without an up-to-date housing needs assessment, there is a possibility that a planning inspector examining local plan documents would not find them 'sound'.
- 10. Legal and policy implications**
- 10.1 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to meet the full objectively assessed housing needs of their area. The papers referred to in this report comply with those requirements.
- 11. Ward(s) affected**
- 11.1 All wards in Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.
- 12. Background papers**
- 12.1 None
- 13. Documents attached**
- 13.1 Appendix A: Cambridgeshire Sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Chapter 12 of the Assessment (Forecasts for homes of all tenures)
Appendix B: Population, Housing and Employment Forecasts: Technical Report
Appendix C: Objectively Assessed Need for Additional Housing – Memorandum of Co-operation between the local authorities in the Cambridge Housing Market Area