

# 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**

**LOP13/010**

### **SITE SPECIFIC ALLOCATIONS LOCAL PLAN PROGRAMME**

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

- 1.1 The Site Specific Allocations Plan must conform to the policies of the adopted Core Strategy, (as amended), including its Spatial Strategy, (Policy CS1), which defines a 'Settlement Hierarchy' and the need to allocate land new dwellings to 2031 in accordance with the emerging Core Strategy Single Issue Review – Housing Policy. The Local Plan must also be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF.
- 1.2 The significant stages in the Council's preparation of the Site Allocations Local Plan thus far can be summarised as follows:
  - Evidence gathering, development and appraisal of 'Issues and Options' in consultation with a variety of stakeholders in 2006,
  - Planning Committee approval of 'Final Issues and Options', (former regulation 25), consultation document in April 2010.
- 1.3 Work on the Local Plan carried out by the former Local Development Framework Working Group, (LDFWG), and Planning Committee up to April 2010, and prior to the High Court Challenge, identified sites 'preferred' for a range of uses for consultation purposes, (the Site Specific Allocations 'Final Issues and Options' DPD). However, the consultation itself was held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Core Strategy High Court Challenge.
- 1.4 It is considered that the Single Issue Review, (SIR), process that is addressing the provisions of the High Court Order is at a sufficiently advanced stage for work on the Site Allocations Local Plan document to recommence.
- 1.5 The Site Specific Allocation Plan will need to allocate sites to meet our housing, employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development needs as evidenced and presented within the relevant policies of the Core Strategy, (2010), as amended but it will also take account of more recent studies and evidence bases so that our Local Plan is 'up-to-date and relevant' and consequently NPPF compliant.

## **2. Recommendation**

### **2.1 The Working Group notes the content of this report which covers progress on the Site Allocations Local Plan document's preparation.**

#### **Contact details**

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## **3. Corporate priorities**

3.1 The Site Allocations Local Plan document relates to a number of corporate priorities including housing, community development, the environment and economic development.

## **4. Key issues**

4.1 The NPPF, (para. 154), specifies that Local Plan documents should be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and that they should set out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted and where.

4.2 Although focussing on the development of specific sites for a variety of uses, the 'allocation' of land within the context of this Local Plan document will not replace the need for planning permission. Rather, the proposals contained within the plan represent a statement of policy against which, (amongst other material considerations), planning applications will ultimately be determined.

4.3 This Local Plan must conform to the policies of the adopted Core Strategy, (as amended), including its Spatial Strategy, (Policy CS1), which defines a 'Settlement Hierarchy' and the need to allocate land for 10,100 new dwellings to 2031, (subject to amendment(s) arising from the Single Issue Review process). The Local Plan must also be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF.

4.4 The significant stages in the Council's preparation of the Site Allocations Local Plan thus far can be summarised as follows:

- Evidence gathering, development and appraisal of 'Issues and Options' in consultation with a variety of stakeholders in 2006,
- Planning Committee approval of 'Final Issues and Options', (former regulation 25), consultation document in April 2010.

- 4.5 Work on the Local Plan carried out by the former Local Development Framework Working Group, (LDFWG), and Planning Committee up to April 2010, and prior to the High Court Challenge, identified sites 'preferred' for a range of uses for consultation purposes, (the Site Specific Allocations 'Final Issues and Options' DPD). However, the consultation itself was held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Core Strategy High Court Challenge.
- 4.6 It is considered that the Single Issue Review, (SIR), process that is addressing the provisions of the High Court Order is at a sufficiently advanced stage for work on the Site Allocations Local Plan document to recommence.
- 4.7 The NPPF, (para.158), identifies that the LPA should ensure that their Local Plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of their area.
- 4.8 The availability, suitability and viability of individual housing sites for inclusion within the Local Plan to address our housing requirements, as they emerge via the SIR process, will be evidenced via the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, (SHLAA). The Local Plan will also allocate sites to meet our employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development needs as evidenced and presented within the relevant policies of the Core Strategy, (2010), as amended but it will also take account of more recent studies and evidence bases so that our Local Plan is 'up-to-date and relevant' and consequently NPPF compliant.
- 4.9 The next stages of the Local Plan's preparation can be summarised as follows:
- Drafting of 'Further Issues and Options', (Regulation 18), Local Plan document for public consultation, (in collaboration with our Elected Members),
  - 6/8 week period of public consultation on the 'Further Issues and Options' to be held November/December/January 2013,
  - Consideration of representations and drafting of 'Submission', (Regulation 19/20), version of the Local Plan document.
  - Site Allocations 'Submission' consultation to be held May/June 2014,
  - Submission to Secretary of State in November 2014,
  - Examination in Public February 2015,
  - Inspector's Report June 2015,
  - Adoption by the Council July 2015.

## **5. Other options considered**

- 5.1 The forthcoming Site Specific Allocations Issues and Options consultation will consider all reasonable alternatives and options for growth within Forest Heath.

## **6. Community impact**

- 6.1 The intention of our policies is the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes, range of job opportunities and services to widen opportunities to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

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

7.1 The Local Development Framework, (LDF), Site Specific Policies and Allocations 'Issues and Options' consultation held in September 2006.

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

8.1 It is considered that the development of the Site Allocations Local Plan document through to adoption can be delivered within the planning services budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

**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 this Local Plan document.

**12. Background papers**

12.1 None.

**13. Documents attached**

13.1 None.