

# Local Plan Working Group



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Forest Heath District Objectively Assessed Housing Need - Update</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LOP/FH/16/003</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Local Plan Working Group</b>	19 January 2016
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<p>To report the changed position regarding the 'all homes' need and affordable need to members in advance of the next steps in the plan preparation process.</p> <p>To note the outcomes of the report which updates the previous 2013 objectively assessed housing need of 7,000 dwellings, over the plan period from 2011 to 2031, to 6,800 over the same period. It is therefore appropriate to plan for the updated figure.</p>	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Local Plan Working Group:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Note the updated evidence which has amended Forest Heath District Council's objectively assessed housing need (OAN) to 6800 dwellings over the plan period from 2011 to 2031. This updates the previously assessed need of 7000 dwellings in 2013 and, therefore, it is appropriate to plan for the updated figure.</b></p> <p><b>(2) The updated OAN of 6800 dwellings should be used to assess the Council's five year land supply.</b></p>	

<p><b>Key Decision:</b></p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Local Development Scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative option(s):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options for progressing the SIR and SSA Local Plan Documents were considered by the Local Plan Working Group on 16 October 2014.</li> <li>• Housing Options Paper was considered and endorsed by the Local Plan Working Group on 22 April 2015.</li> <li>• CS SIR and SSA Local Plan Documents and the accompanying SEA/SA and supporting documents were considered by the Local Plan Working Group on 30 June 2015 and agreed by Cabinet on 14 July 2015 for consultation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implications:</b></p>	
<p><i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>There is a requirement for Local Planning Authorities to produce a Local Plan and to undertake consultation during its preparation under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.</p>
<p><i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b></p>	<p>The Local Development Scheme includes a risk assessment of issues that could affect the Councils ability to deliver the Local Plan(s) in accordance with the programme. Actions to manage the risks have also been identified. Failure to produce an up to date Local Plan programme may result in an unsound Plan or</p>

		legal challenge.	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Significant public opposition	High	Local Plan documents have the potential to be highly contentious. Whilst every effort will be made to build cross-community consensus, there is a high risk of significant public opposition.	Medium
Loss of Staff	Medium	The structure and staffing levels within the Place Shaping Team will be constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the appropriate level of skills and resources are maintained.	Low
Financial shortfall	Medium	In the short/medium term, the Council has allocated funds through its Financial Services Planning process to allow for the preparation of the Local Plan. In the longer term, should costs increase, a review of the financial allocation will be required.	Low
Changing Political Priorities	Medium	Proposals are discussed with Members of all parties via a variety of means, the Local Plan Working Group etc.). This helps build consensus and reduces the likelihood of wholesale change of direction from local politicians.	Low
Legal Challenge	High	As a measure of last resort anyone may issue a legal challenge within six week of adoption of the Local Plan. Officers will continue to seek to ensure that local plan documents are prepared within the legal framework in order to reduce the risk of successful legal challenge.	Medium
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All Wards in the District.	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		<p>Forest Heath Core Strategy Development Plan Document (May 2010).  <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/forestheathcorestrategy.cfm">http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/forestheathcorestrategy.cfm</a></p> <p>Forest Heath Core Strategy Policy CS7 Single Issue Review – Issues and Options 2012.  <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/upload/Core-strategy-policy-CS7-single-issue-review-1.pdf">http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/upload/Core-strategy-policy-CS7-single-issue-review-1.pdf</a>)</p>	

	Forest Heath Core Strategy Policy CS7 Single Issue Review – Issues and Options 2015 ( <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/fh-single-issue-review-sir-of-core-strategy-policy-cs7.cfm">http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/fh-single-issue-review-sir-of-core-strategy-policy-cs7.cfm</a> )
<b>Documents attached:</b>	<b>Working Paper 1:</b> Forest Heath District Market Signals and Objectively Assessed Housing Need (January 2016)

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## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)**

### **1.1 Background**

National planning policy and guidance makes clear that local planning authorities should undertake their own assessment of their housing needs and set an appropriate target to meet these needs.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was prepared in 2013 and indicated an objectively assessed need (OAN) for 350 dwellings per annum for Forest Heath in the period 2011-2031, or 7000 homes in total. This figure was used to inform the two options for the overall housing provision planned for at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Issues and Options stage of the SIR and SALP.

Following changes in national policy and guidance and other local circumstances including the planned closure of the RAF Mildenhall airbase, an update of the objectively assessed housing need was commissioned. A number of other authorities within the Cambridge sub region, our housing market area have been required to update their OAN. South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City undertook a joint update of their OAN in 2015. This was followed by an update for Forest Heath, East Cambridgeshire and St Edmundsbury Council's. All OAN updates were prepared by Cambridge Research Group (CRG), who undertook the 2011 and 2013 assessments, ensuring a consistent approach.

For Forest Heath the OAN update (Jan 2016) indicates a revised 'all homes' need for 6800 dwellings, 200 dwellings lower than the previous SHMA indicated covering the same time period 2011-2031. This assessment was supported by evidence prepared by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) on behalf of the council which considered the impact of market signals on both the objectively assessed housing need and whether an uplift is justified in setting a housing provision target to meet more of the affordable housing need. The report can be read in full at working paper 1 (please note: Officers are fact checking the report, once finalised, the report will be issued in advance of the LPWG).

The OAN will inform the setting of an appropriate housing provision target for replacement policy CS7 of the SIR. The process of assessing needs and setting a housing provision target is clearly set out in the PBA report. The PBA assessment concludes that an uplift of 5% is an appropriate adjustment, giving rise to an overall OAN of 6800 dwellings. Any further uplift for market signals would not be appropriate to address more of the affordable need.

The affordable housing need for 2014 for the district has been confirmed at 2638 dwellings, a small alteration on the figure reported at the Issue and Options stage, which reported at 2703. This slight reduction in need when read alongside the reduced 'all homes' housing need of 6800 will not materially alter the overall balance between affordable need and 'all homes' need previously reported at

the Issues and Options stage.

## **2. Outcome**

- 2.1 Officers wish to report the changed position regarding the 'all homes' need and affordable need to members in advance of the next steps in the plan preparation process. The OAN of 6800 dwellings over the plan period from 2011 to 2031, updates the previously assessed need of 7000 dwellings in 2013 and therefore it is appropriate to plan for the updated figure.

Following this meeting of the Local Plan Working Group, the final Core Strategy SIR document and Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 3<sup>rd</sup> Issues and Options documents will be prepared. The evidence based studies prepared by Cambridge Research Group and Peter Brett Associates will be used to inform the setting of an appropriate housing target provision for replacement policy CS7 of the SIR.

The updated OAN of 6800 dwellings should be used to assess the Council's five year land supply.