

# CABINET

Monday, 29 March 2021

## UPDATE ON THE LOCAL PLAN

### Report of the Senior Planning Policy Specialist

---

#### Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the progress in the examination of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) and the preparation of main and additional modifications to the Plan.

---

#### Summary

This Report summarises the Council's progress in the examination of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), heading towards the adoption of the Plan. The Council has worked closely with the Inspector to address the issues raised. This Report provides an update on the outstanding actions to finalise the proposed main and additional modifications to the Plan. The proposed main modifications schedule will be subject to a Council decision on 27 May 2021 and public consultation in June/July 2021.

#### Statutory Powers

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ("PCPA 2004")

Localism Act 2011

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ("the Local Planning Regulations")

#### Strategic Implications

1. This report provides an update on the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) ("the Plan"). The policies in the Plan relate to and enable achievement of all the Corporate Plan objectives and are a principal way in which the Council shapes and plans for the places where people live, work and visit.

#### Introduction

2. The Plan sets out the policies to guide future development within the Borough. On adoption, it will be the main statutory document against which individual planning applications in the Borough are determined.

3. In October 2018, the Council approved the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The main hearing sessions to consider the Plan were timetabled by the Planning Inspectorate and held from November 2019 – January 2020. At the end of these sessions, the Inspector agreed with the Council specific “action points” to be addressed following the hearings.
4. In April 2020, the Inspector wrote a post hearings advice note to the Council setting out further key issues concerning the Plan and providing a clear route towards adoption.
5. On 25 June 2020, Cabinet agreed to continue to progress the examination in line with the Inspector’s note and the further action points and other main modifications that may be necessary. Cabinet noted that Full Council had already provided delegated authority to progress the examination and it approved the ongoing work on modifications to the Plan and further evidence required to facilitate the examination. Cabinet also noted that the main modifications schedule would be considered by Cabinet and approved by Full Council for public consultation.

### **Progress since June 2020**

6. Following the Cabinet decision to continue with the examination, the Council has worked closely with the Inspector and is confident that all the issues raised have already been addressed or can be addressed through main and additional modifications, subject to the Council and Inspector reviewing the main modifications consultation responses. The further evidence requested by the Inspector has been sent through in a timely manner and the Council is preparing specific wording on the proposed main modifications.
7. The Council has provided the Inspector with the following evidence to consider:
  - (a) Update on housing supply: The Council updated the supply calculations to reflect discussions at the hearing sessions, the changes recommended in the Inspector’s note including the deletion of the Strategic Growth Option (SGO) from this version of the Plan and an update of completions, permissions and projections. This indicates that there is a supply of 11,966 new homes (including homes completed since 2016) which will fully meet needs until 2032; and that the longer term shortfall to 2036 as a result of deleting the SGO has reduced to 2,614 dwellings as a result of increased delivery on other sites. The latest calculation of the five-year housing supply published in November 2020 also shows that the Council can demonstrate a 5.9 years’ supply of housing (including a 5% buffer). In the Inspector’s post hearing advice note, she agreed that the Plan will deliver sufficient housing for the majority of the Plan period and the shortfall could be addressed in an early review of the Plan. This provides an opportunity for the strategic work currently underway by the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) to be taken into account.

- (b) Updated Affordable Housing Assessment (ORS, July 2020): This updated the findings of the 2017 assessment and considered the impact of a higher Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure for housing. It demonstrates that, while an increase in the OAN leads to a small increase in the number of households in affordable housing need (an additional 35 homes a year), the proportion of affordable housing required to meet this need remains the same (28% of total dwellings). This proportion remains lower than the policy requirement in the Plan (35% of sites of 10 or more dwellings) and lower than the proportion achieved in the last two years, in which 39% and 40% of all new homes were affordable housing.
- (c) Delivery of employment land and the Chickenhall Lane Link Road (CLLR): Part of the CLLR is required to deliver employment land and meet employment targets under the Plan. The CLLR Report demonstrates evidence of the reasonable prospect of its delivery and the proactive actions taken since the close of the examination hearings. Since this time, the Council has also supported the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership's Freeport bid, which includes land allocated for development at the North East Business Park of Southampton International Airport.
- (d) Settlement Gaps Study: The Council has produced an updated study to provide a stronger evidence base and a clearer and more robust justification for the proposed settlement gaps. Following extensive surveys and analysis, the Study proposes specific changes to gaps and justifies the retention of most of the settlement gaps in the Borough. The Study was produced by Deacons Design in collaboration with the Council and the Local Areas were briefed on the implications for their areas. The proposed main modifications will reflect the findings of the study with changes to the gap boundaries and revised policy wording. This will clearly set out the criteria for development in gaps with more detail provided in the supporting text.
- (e) Meeting retail needs and town centre boundary review: This Review identified scope to meet short and medium term retail needs through the redevelopment of vacant land and buildings in the centres and the need to further reassess needs to take account of post pandemic trends.
- (f) Detailed information set out in action points: The action points range from clarification of information to rewording or deletion of policies.
- (g) Policy HA2 Mercury Marina and Riverside Camping and Caravan Park: The Council produced a Position Statement setting out its position opposing residential uses in the policy for Mercury Marina, and identifying pressing traffic and transport issues in the Hamble peninsula. There has been further extensive correspondence with the Inspector on this policy and an additional hearing session (see below). The recent appeal decision at GE Aviation, Hamble (Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/W/20/3255559; Application Ref: O/18/84191) where the

main reasons for the refusal of residential development included highway issues, strengthens the Council's position on this location.

- (h) Policy WE4 Ageas Bowl: This sets out the Council's position on appropriate development within this site. The Council has secured the agreement of the Ageas Bowl for a form of wording to put to the Inspector.
  - (i) Draft Schedule of proposed Main Modifications: This sets out the wording and map changes following from the Inspector's letters and action points. Once the proposed main modifications for public consultation are finalised these will be published as part of the Report for the Council decision on 27 May.
  - (j) Responses to further questions: These included updates proposed as a result of the national changes to the Use Classes Order. These changes involve removing references to superseded use classes, providing greater flexibility for uses in Eastleigh town centre and restricting uses on strategic employment sites.
8. On 5 January 2021, the Inspector held an additional hearing session to discuss policy HA2 and potential changes to the Mercury Marina allocation, including residential uses. This was a virtual hearing session on this policy only and followed a similar format to the previous hearing sessions.
  9. Updates are underway to the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment to assess the amended policies. This is part of the process of finalising the proposed main modifications schedule which the Inspector wishes to recommend and on which the Council is required to consult.
  10. The Council is also finalising an additional modifications schedule with further minor changes that are not related to the soundness of the Plan and do not materially affect its policies, such as corrections, factual updates and formatting changes. A schedule showing changes to the Policies Map is also being prepared. These will be published for information alongside the main modifications schedule.
  11. The main modifications schedule will be considered by Cabinet and, subject to approval by Full Council on 27 May, public consultation will take place on these changes (only) in June/July 2021. The Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessments will be published for consultation alongside the main modifications schedule. The consultation will take place in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2015) and the Addendum Statement of Community Involvement (2020), and in line with any Covid related restrictions in place at that time. The representations made on the main modifications will be sent to the Inspector who will consider them and then complete her final report with recommended main modifications. The Council can then finalise the Plan incorporating these modifications and the Policies Map and Full Council can take its final decision on the formal adoption of the Plan as modified.

## **Financial Implications**

12. None related to this Report. Studies and work to progress the Plan to adoption are accounted for in existing budgets.

## **Risk Assessment**

13. There are no identified risks relating to this Report.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

14. This Report does not have equality and diversity implications as it merely provides an update of the progress of the Plan.
15. However, as set out above, work is currently being undertaken to finalise the main modifications needed to make the Plan 'sound'. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the submitted Plan (October 2018). The assessments of the proposed main modifications will include an updated Equality Impact Assessment. This will be provided to inform the Council decision on the main modifications.

## **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

16. This Report does not have climate change and environmental implications as it merely provides an update of the progress of the Plan.
17. However, as noted above, a schedule of main modifications is currently being finalised. This process includes an update of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment which will include consideration of climate change and other environmental implications.

## **Conclusion**

18. Cabinet are asked to note the progress on the Local Plan and timescales for the consultation on the main modifications schedule.

DAWN HEPPELL  
SENIOR PLANNING POLICY SPECIALIST

Date: 1 March 2021  
Contact Officer: Dawn Heppell  
Tel No:  
e-mail: dawn.heppell@eastleigh.gov.uk  
Appendices Attached: None

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material

extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.