

Examination of the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan

Comments by Dr T W Ridler – Chairman Overton parish Council

The Parish Council is concerned that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council do not have a Local Plan in place and, notwithstanding any comments below, it may well be better to work with a less than perfect plan, rather than have no plan at all.

1.0 Sustainable Development

The earlier investigation into potential sites (SHLAA as of May 2011) produced a list of ten sites for Overton – all outside the current settlement boundary and not surprisingly, all on green field sites. The current absence of a Plan leaves the village at the mercy of unplanned speculative proposals on these Greenfield sites.

Overton is well into the production of a Neighbourhood plan to meet the housing numbers requested by the Borough – even though it does not believe it needs these dwellings. It is doing this both to minimise the impact of the use of Greenfield sites as perceived by the current residents and, by involving as many people as possible, to mitigate the down sides of development and ensure proper integration and sustainability.

While this examination is in progress there should be a moratorium on speculative planning applications ie those that are unlikely to form part of the plan.

2.1 Housing Need

The inspector has drawn attention to the dwellings per annum figure of the South East Plan. The SE Plan assumed that economic development, and consequently the need for dwellings would be in Basingstoke town and the area to the east linking up with the Blackwater valley. It assumed minimal additional housing needs in the rest of Hampshire to the west of Basingstoke. Overton is in this later area, it has modest housing needs and does not require urban scale developments.

2.3 Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The “Transport Assessment Report May 2014” appears only to be concerned with the impact on Basingstoke Town and not on the cumulative impact on other settlements within the Borough of nearby developments, such as those near Andover in “Test Valley”. We also note that the marketing of houses in the Overton area is often aimed at London Commuters rather than the rest of the Borough.

3.3 Water Quality

The village sits, in a bowl, aside the river test, sewage leakage (and there have been a number of these) is most unpleasant and puts this fine chalk stream at risk. The current sewerage system is close to capacity and is already dependent on holding tanks and overnight pumping. Investment needs to be carried out before further development.

Most properties receive their drinking water from a local borehole and people are already reporting reduced pressure at peak periods.