

Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Examination

Inspector's Key Issues & Discussion Note

These notes provide a summary of the issues identified by the Inspector in the form of questions, and they will form the basis of the Examination Hearings which commence on **Tuesday 6th October 2015** in the Civic Offices, London Rd, Basingstoke RG21 4AH. These questions may be refined in the light of the Inspector's consideration of the representations received prior to the Examination Hearings. **Please note that the word limit for further statements is 3,000 per issue, except for the Council on Issue 5, which will be expected to respond on all site allocations.**

- ISSUE 1: Legal Requirements & Duty to Co-operate
- ISSUE 2: Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment
- ISSUE 3: Spatial Strategy & Housing Need
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- ISSUE 8: Infrastructure
- ISSUE 9: Transport
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- ISSUE 11: Development Management, Risks & Monitoring

Theme 1 - Overall strategy, housing provision and distribution and sustainability (Policies SS1-6 CN1-5; and EM 1-3)

ISSUE 1: Legal Requirements & Duty to Co-operate

- 1. Legal Requirements:** *Does the Plan meet all its legal requirements (e.g. in relation to the Local Development Scheme; Sustainable Community Strategy; Statement of Community Involvement; and Local Development Regulations, 2012)?*
- 2. Duty to Co-operate (DTC):** *It is necessary for the Inspector to consider whether the Council has fulfilled its duty under Section 33A of the Act, so as to maximise the effectiveness of the plan making process when planning for strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.*
 - 2.1** *Has the Council **worked collaboratively** with other authorities and organisations during plan preparation on strategic planning matters that cross administrative boundaries?*
 - 2.2** *In particular has the Plan's approach to determining its housing requirements and provision been **compatible with** that of **neighbouring authorities**? [A critical factor is that the duty to co-operate (DTC) is incapable of modification at the Examination stage].*
 - 2.3** *Has the Council worked or liaised with the **relevant bodies set out in the PPG**? How has the Council also co-operated with the relevant*

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)?

2.4 What particular **outcomes** can the Council point to in relation to DTC?

ISSUE 2: Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

3. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA):

- 3.1 Is the **spatial strategy** supported by the SA and the HRA?
- 3.2 Have **reasonable alternatives** been considered in the SA? Is there a clear audit trail from the consideration of option to the preferred strategy in the Plan?
- 3.3 Which **adverse effects** identified by the SA require significant mitigation, and how is the Council addressing these issues?

ISSUE 3: Spatial Strategy & Housing Need

4. Spatial Strategy and housing need:

- 4.1 Are the overall vision, objectives and **spatial strategy** of the Plan, as set out in policy SS1 and the supporting text, based on a sound assessment of Basingstoke and Deane's demographic and socio-economic needs, environmental characteristics, existing and proposed infrastructure and relationships with neighbouring areas, in accordance with national planning policy?
- 4.2 Is the Plan's assessment of the household needs for Basingstoke over the plan period (to 2029), as equating to 850 dwellings per annum (dpa), (i.e. an increase from the submitted Plan figure of 748 dpa) expressed in the amended policy SS1 and in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (PS/02/17) and Housing Topic Paper (PS/02/18), based on **the most up-to-date and robust objective assessment of housing need (OAHN)** for the Borough? In particular: (i) Are the Plan's migration, demographic change and household representative rates (HRR) assumptions realistic? (ii) Has an allowance for existing unmet housing need been factored in? (iii) What are the sustainability arguments for aiming for either the higher or lower end of the range of housing requirements for the Borough?
- 4.3 Have the **2012 based household projections** brought about any amendments to the OAHN?
- 4.4 In terms of the previous rates of **housing delivery** and the delivery target(s) that have been in place in recent years, should the appropriate 'buffer' to ensure choice and competition (as set out in the

Framework para 47 [2]) be 5% or 20%? Should this buffer be factored in over the first 5 year period or for the plan period as a whole?

- 4.5 Are the forecast **job growth** figures for the Borough realistic? In particular do they predict reasonably strong growth in the last decade of the plan period?
- 4.6 What **other factors** should be taken into account in determining the overall housing provision for Basingstoke over the plan period? For example, what weight should be given to the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), covering aspects such as market signals, and historic suppression of household formation rates?
- 4.7 In relation to the Framework para 47 [1], is the Basingstoke and Deane **Housing Market Area** (HMA), as defined by the Borough boundary, the most appropriate 'building block' for assessing the area's housing requirements? Is there a case for Basingstoke's housing need (and therefore housing provision) to be assessed over a wider area than the Borough boundary, and if so which area?
- 4.8 In relation to policies CN1 and CN2, does the household needs assessment for Basingstoke and Deane fully take into account the Borough's **affordable housing** needs? Will the Local Plan maximise the amount of affordable housing delivered? Should the Local Plan include additional requirements, such as percentage dwelling size, which could set a clear strategic marker for the Council in its negotiations to maximise affordable housing delivery which meets needs? Are the affordable housing targets viable or will they compromise the delivery of both market and affordable housing?
- 4.9 Regarding policy CN4, is the provision of **specialist housing** (e.g. housing for the elderly, disabled and students) a strategic matter for Basingstoke?
- 4.10 Is policy SS2, for the **regeneration** of priority areas within the Borough, justified and realistic in terms of viability and resource constraints?
- 4.11 Should the Local Plan include a policy which states that, should the Plan's monitoring indicates that an ongoing 5 year deliverable and a subsequent 5 year supply of developable housing land can no longer be sustained within the Borough, the Council will **review its housing land provision** and bring on-stream additional housing areas as required? Should such a policy encourage the reuse of previously developed land?
- 4.12 In relation to policy SS4, is the Council confident that the Plan makes provision for a **5 year housing land supply** on specific and deliverable sites?

- 4.13 *Is the Plan overly reliant on **sources of development land** for new homes, such as on the one hand, previously development land and on the other hand, large, peripheral greenfield sites some of which are considered to be remote from the town centre and urban facilities?*

ISSUE 4: Other Housing Matters

5. Distribution of housing development:

- 5.1 *Is the Plan's **distribution of overall housing development**, including indicative levels of housing growth in the Borough, as set out in policy SS3, the Council's Document PS/02/14 and the 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (HO4), justified and at the right level of detail for the Plan?*
- 5.2 *Should essential **strategic allocations** of housing land be shown indicatively on the Key Diagram?*
- 5.3 *In the light of the requirements in the Framework for clear policies on what will be permitted and where (paragraph 154), is the **level of detail** shown on the Policies Map appropriate?*

6. Deliverability of Housing:

- 6.1 *Is the overall level of housing provision deliverable, especially in relation to **viability**? In particular, is there adequate justification for the supply that is expected from existing commitments, identified opportunity sites and small windfalls?*
- 6.2 *In all other respects, are there reasonable prospects that an **appropriate range of housing** by size and type will be delivered through the implementation of the Local Plan, including policy CN3?*

7. Landscape and other constraints on development:

- 7.1 *Are the Plan's **landscape protection policies** (EM1-3) sound and how much weight should be given to them as constraints to new development? How important are the proposed strategic gaps and how should they be designated?*
- 7.2 *Should a **review of any of the landscape policies** be undertaken as part of the Plan?*
- 7.3 *Is the Plan relying on the release of any sites for housing or other development which are located within **other areas of physical restraint**, such as areas of high flood risk, or best and most versatile agricultural land, and if so, is this justified?*

- 8. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation:** *With reference to the Council's Documents HO8 and HO9, is the provision for gypsy and traveller accommodation in policy CN5 appropriately justified and effective, e.g. in*

relation to Government policy as set out in DCLG: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites?

9. Housing in the countryside: Is policy SS6 justified and in accordance with national policy?

10. Neighbourhood Plans: Does policy SS5 provide an acceptable level of guidance for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, especially in relation to the delivery of housing?

ISSUE 5: Greenfield Site Allocations

11. Greenfield Site Allocations: Are the proposed **major new developments** for new housing and other uses positively prepared, justified and deliverable? Does the **level of detail** in the policies and Inset Diagrams meet the requirements in the PPG for Local Plans to make clear **what** is intended to happen in the area over the life of the plan, **where** and **when** this will occur and **how** it will be delivered? (PPG Ref ID 12-002-20140306.)

- 11.1 Policy SS3.1 – Swing Swang Lane
- 11.2 Policy SS3.2 – Kennel Farm
- 11.3 Policy SS3.3 – Razor’s Farm
- 11.4 Policy SS3.4 – North of Popley Fields
- 11.5 Policy SS3.5 – Overton Hill
- 11.6 Policy SS3.6 – South of Bloswood Lane
- 11.7 Policy SS3.7 – Redlands
- 11.8 Policy SS3.8 – Upper Cufaude Farm
- 11.9 Policy SS3.9 – East of Basingstoke
- 11.10 Policy SS3.10 – Manydown
- 11.11 Policy SS3.11 – Basingstoke Golf Course
- 11.12 Policy SS3.12 – Hounscome Fields

ISSUE 6: Omission Sites

12. Potential development sites omitted from the Plan: Are there other sites, currently omitted from the Plan, which justify inclusion, and if so on what grounds?

(Please note that these cannot be new sites – they must already have been put forward in previous representations on the Plan during the relevant consultation periods. Respondents must provide a plan of each omission site with their statement, for clarity. The Inspector will not hear objections to omission sites since there will be an opportunity to submit these at a later stage, should he decide that further sites are required in the Plan.)

Theme 2 – The economy, town centre and retail development (Policies EP1-5; and SS8-9)

ISSUE 7: Employment, Town Centre, Retail Development & Rural Economy

13. Employment:

- 13.1 *Are the expectations in the Plan for **employment growth** soundly based on a coherent framework? Are there any changes to the Plan needed in response to the Government's Growth Agenda?*
- 13.2 **Future Employment Development:** *Are the economic strategy in policy EP1 and the employment provision in policy EP2 sufficient to meet the Borough's employment needs over the plan period, and are they justified when assessed the light of the requirements in the Framework for clear policies on what will be permitted and where (paragraph 154)?*
- 13.3 **Existing employment areas:** *What is the likely role of the strategic employment areas identified in the Policies Map and in paragraph 7.12 of the Plan?*
- 13.4 **Basing View Regeneration:** *Does policy SS8 strike the right balance between focus and flexibility?*
- 13.5 **Major New Employment Land:** *(a) Should the Plan provide more clarification including criteria and spatial distribution of major new employment land provision? (b) Should it provide more detail on the location of existing employment land to be released to other uses?*
- 13.6 **Housing/employment balance:** *(a) How well related are the Plan's housing provision and the provision of land and sites for jobs within the context of a high economic growth scenario? (b) Should the Council aim to achieve a measure of self-containment by the end of the plan period, and if so, should this be included in the Plan? (c) Is there a balance between housing provision and maintaining an adequate supply of employment land?*

14. The Town Centre and retail and office growth:

- 14.1 *In policy EP3, should the Plan make provision for a specific quantum or range of **retail floorspace** in Basingstoke town centre which is justified and deliverable within the plan period?*
- 14.2 *Is there a need for greater locational and/or qualitative **guidance for retail development** within or adjacent to town centre or elsewhere?*
- 14.3 *Should the Plan provide more detail on the quantum and location (s) of **convenience retail provision** for the plan period?*
- 14.4 **Basingstoke Leisure Park:** *Does policy SS9 strike the right balance between focus and flexibility?*

14.5 *Is the Plan sufficiently focused in relation to providing strategic guidance in relation to town centre **office growth**?*

14.6. **The Rural Economy and Tourism** – *Are policies EP4-5 justified and effective?*

Theme 3 – Infrastructure, including transport and waste management, implementation, phasing and monitoring, and environmental matters (Policies CN6-9; SS7, SS10-11; and EM4-12)

ISSUE 8: Infrastructure

15 Waste management:

15.1 *Is there a need for a **waste management policy** in the Plan, eg to identify/safeguard sustainable waste management sites at an indicative level, or make clear that future DPDs will allocate these sites?*

15.2 *Is there a need for the Plan to include a policy on **construction and demolition waste**, avoidance/recovery during construction of the need for aggregate recycling facilities?*

16 Flood Risk:

16.1 *Is policy EM7 justified and deliverable in relation to managing flood risk?*

17 Infrastructure delivery: *With reference to the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (PS/02/14 Appendix H) and the IDP Addendum (PS/02/20):*

17.1 *Do policy CN6 and the **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** (IDP) provide sufficient guidance for the successful implementation of the Plan?*

17.2 *Which **schemes are critical** to the successful implementation of the Plan? Are these schemes viable? Are there any show stoppers?*

17.3 *What is the relationship between the Plan and the **Local Enterprise Partnerships** (LEPs) in terms of investment priorities and the provision of critical infrastructure?*

17.4 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** *Does the Plan provide the necessary strategic guidance to guide the preparation of a CIL, including identifying the infrastructure gap which CIL would help to bridge?*

17.5 *Are policies CN7-8 sufficiently comprehensive to cover all key aspects of **community infrastructure** and services and establish a robust basis for implementation?*

18. Nuclear Installations: Does policy SS7 provide sufficient guidance to accord with national planning and safety policy?

ISSUE 9: Transport

19 Transport:

- 19.1 Has the capacity of the **transport infrastructure** been assessed, and is there a deliverable framework for improvements that are required?
- 19.2 Does policy CN9 provide a **strategic focus for transport schemes** in the Borough?
- 19.3 Is the **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)** sufficiently focused on the key transport requirements, including when, how and by whom they will be delivered?
- 19.4 Are **parking and access** issues in the town centre properly addressed in the Plan?
- 19.5 Should the Plan set **modal shift** targets to promote sustainable transport?
- 19.6 **Public Transport Links:** Does the Plan provide a robust strategy for public transport links?
- 19.7 **New rail stations:** Do policies SS10 and SS11 strike the right balance between aspiration and effectiveness?

ISSUE 10: Environment

20. The environment:

- 20.1 Do policies EM4-5 provide a clear and integrated framework for conserving, managing and increasing the Borough's **green infrastructure**, bio-diversity and other environmental assets?
- 20.2 **Other environmental policies:** Are the policies addressing water quality (EM6), for example in relation to the River Loddon; sustainable water use (EM9); the historic environment (EM11); and pollution (EM12), justified and effective?
- 20.3 **Renewable energy and climate change:** Is policy EM8 sufficiently focused to provide meaningful guidance on the Plan's requirements for renewable / low carbon energy generation? Should the policy be amended in view of the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on new considerations to be applied to proposed **wind energy development**, which came into effect on 18 June 2015? This WMS indicates that when determining applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant permissions if (a) the proposed

development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and (b) following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the proposals reflects the planning concerns of affected local communities and therefore has their backing.

20.4 *Should the policy include any **targets?** Otherwise, how can the success of this policy be measured?*

20.5 *How will the Local Plan achieve successful adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of **climate change?***

Issue 11: Development Management, Risks & Monitoring

21. Development management:

21.1 *Does policy EM10 provide sufficient guidance to cover aspects for new development, such as high design quality and impact on living conditions for future occupiers and neighbouring residents?*

22. Uncertainties and Risks:

22.1 *Overall, does the Plan take sufficient account of uncertainties and risks? How flexible is it?*

23. Monitoring:

23.1 *How effective will the monitoring arrangements be?*

Mike Fox

Planning Inspector

17 July 2015