

Appendix 12a – Progression and Refinement of Options from ‘Issues and Options’ Stage to the Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan

Issue 1 – Provision of Employment Land

Option 1 has generally been taken forward in the Pre-submission Local Plan. Against the backdrop of the demographic factors, implications of the housing requirement on the local economy and labour market have been considered to ensure that there would be no unintended adverse consequences on the local economy. This assessed the implications of the housing number on the balance between jobs and workers concluding that the 748 figure would help to support an increase in the region of 7,300 jobs over the plan period.

In addition, in light of the conclusions of the Employment Land Review 2014 the Revised Pre-submission addresses the needs of different employment sectors and the type and location of employment land required over the plan period to ensure future economic needs are being met.

Issue 2 - Location of Future Employment Development

Option 1 is most closely aligned to the approach which has been taken forward in the Local Plan, which highlights that the focus for the key employment locations should be within the centre of Basingstoke, including Basing View, whilst maintaining and encouraging economic development on other allocated strategic employment areas. This builds on a number of the issues raised in the Key Themes document under the heading ‘Local Economy’, where a proposed ambition was outlined, including thriving and well-designed employment areas, a regenerated Basing View and complementary uses to support the employment functions.

Option 4 has also been generally carried forward by permitting employment uses on the strategic housing sites where they will help to create mixed sustainable communities.

Issue 3 – Approaches to Existing Built-Up Areas

Of the two options identified, a combination of both approaches is being taken forward in the Local Plan, reflecting the fact that opportunities to re-use sites in the urban area can limit the requirement for greenfield sites. This was considered in the Key Themes document under the heading of 'Regeneration and Renewal' and 'Accommodating Housing Needs', where issues around using previously developed land and greenfield sites were explored in more detail. These issues are identified through the general strategy of the Local Plan which seeks to prioritise brownfield sites, where suitable, and includes a component in the housing land supply to account for such sites. This is complemented by a policy approach which releases existing employment land to other uses and which allows for consideration of development on other sites (e.g. employment land / open space) where the proposals meet the various tests set out in the policies.

Issue 4 – Location of Greenfield Development

Of the three options identified, options 2 and 3 are most closely aligned to the approach being taken forward. This seeks to locate the majority of development around the main settlements in the borough, with the exception of Tadley, where development is restricted due to the AWE site at Aldermaston. Option 1 was not taken forward due to:

- The outcomes of consultation on the developing Local Plan, including the New Homes consultation, which identified that development should take a more dispersed approach the borough; and
- The availability of sites in settlements outside of Basingstoke which could accommodate development in appropriate locations and meet local housing needs where it arises.

It should be noted that due to the revocation of the South East Plan through the Localism Act, the approach of locating the majority of development within the 'Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley' is no longer relevant.

Issue 5 – Approach to Greenfield Development

Options 2 and 3 are most closely aligned to that being taken forward through the Local Plan, with greenfield allocations around Basingstoke and also some of the borough's larger settlements. However, the plan also includes a major allocation at Manydown for 3,400 units. This strategy reflects:

- The outcomes of consultation on the Local Plan including the New Homes consultation which identified that development should take a more dispersed approach across the borough;
- The scope to provide homes in locations to meet local need where it arises, and where these homes are in proximity to services and facilities;
- The approach of making use of available infrastructure capacity where it exists in the borough; and
- Locating development on the most suitable and sustainable sites for development in light of all the relevant factors.

Issue 6 – Future Approaches to Existing Built-Up Areas

Of the options presented, option 1 is most closely aligned to the approach being taken forward, albeit with elements of options 3 and 4 being incorporated in to the policies of the plan. This issue was explored in the Key Themes document under the heading 'Regeneration and Renewal', 'Local Economy' and 'Accommodating Housing Needs', which considered the scope for regeneration of existing areas, and re-use of employment land for alternative uses. The Local Plan takes forward these issues through the inclusion of a specific policy to promote and support regeneration, with areas identified to bring forward such proposals. This is supported by other policies in the plan which de-allocate some employment land and provide a framework to consider proposals for a change of use from employment or open space to other uses, including residential, where the tests of the policy can be complied with. In addition, elements of option 6 have been taken forward through the preparation of locally specific documents across the borough, such as conservation area appraisals, village design statements and the Basingstoke urban character study to highlight particular features of an area which must be taken into account in making decisions. Whilst these do not specifically 'limit' development, they do help to ensure that development respects the existing character of an area and, in the case of conservation areas, seeks to enhance this.

Issue 7 – Future Approaches to Greenfield Development in the Borough

The approach taken by the Local Plan reflects all of the identified options as a result of:

- The findings of consultation on the Local Plan, which identified the need to disperse development to the main settlements;
- The findings of the evidence base, including the SHLAA and site assessment, which have identified and assessed the suitability of greenfield sites with the scope to accommodate housing in the future.

It also reflects issues around Tadley and the nearby AWE site at Aldermaston, which limits growth locally. It should also be noted that the options set out in the Issues and Options document include larger areas of land and that only specific sites within these larger areas have been allocated for development, in light of the available evidence base. This reflects the outcomes of the site assessment work, undertaken for the Category One SHLAA sites.

Issue 8 – What Level of Detail Should be Included in the Local Plan on Locations for Housing?

Of the two options identified, option 2 has been carried forward in to the Local Plan. This is to ensure that the necessary level of detail is provided in the document and to ensure that development can be brought forward at the appropriate time to ensure a five year supply of sites for housing. Option 1 has not been taken forward as this is not in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Issue 9 – How Do We Build in Flexibility?

Of the options outlined, options 1 and 2 have generally been taken forward in the Local Plan through the identification of specific sites for development, to meet the borough's housing target. On 6 June 2013, Cabinet agreed the local housing target of 748 units per annum for the period 2011 to 2029. This equates to a total of 13,464 homes over the Plan period. The Local Plan makes provision for approximately 13,964 homes, offering some flexibility in housing delivery with a buffer of 500 dwellings. Option 3 has not been taken forward as this would create a lack of certainty for residents and landowners as to where new development will be located in the future.

Issue 10 – Approaches to Development in the Rural Parts of the Borough

The approach taken forward by the Local Plan is most closely aligned to elements of options 1, 2 and 3, but does not reflect option 4. The Local Plan and other evidence base highlight those settlements where there are the greatest range of services and facilities, and allocates either a specific site for future development or a number of homes to be provided in the future. In addition, it outlines that the existing SPBs will be maintained, until such time that they are reviewed through a future Development Plan Document. This will consider both the exact location of SPBs and the settlements which are defined by SPBs. However, the Local Plan also reflects the approach of Neighbourhood Planning, and the positive manner in which communities can bring forward development locally, including the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, Rural Exception Sites and other mechanisms, such as the Community Right to Build or Neighbourhood Development Orders. This approach reflects the findings of consultations on the Local Plan and also policy at a national level. It also specifically reflects the aspirations of local communities and parish councils in the borough to prepare local documents.

Option 4 has not been taken forward due to a number of factors including the strong support expressed by parish councils for the concept of Settlement Policy Boundaries, which provides clarity and certainty on where development is and is not generally acceptable in principle.

Issue 11 – Approach to Existing Employment Area

Of the options identified, the Local Plan is most closely aligned to options 1 and 2, identifying specific strategic sites within which employment related development should be located, in addition to a policy which provides a framework to consider alternative proposals within defined areas. This reflects the findings of the Employment Land Review, which highlights that there is an over-supply of employment land for offices and that some of the allocated employment land may no longer be attractive to business and is in need of regeneration and investment. It also reflects the issues explored in the Key Themes document in respect of the types of business uses to be catered for.

In respect of option 1, the Local Plan specifically includes a policy to set out the approach on Basing View, given the proposal to regenerate and improve this area. This reflects one of the proposed ambitions as set out in the Key Themes document which also explored issues around its delivery.

Option 3 has not been taken forward as it is considered to be more appropriate to retain flexibility within the allocated employment areas to adapt to market requirements over the course of the plan period.

Issue 12 – Rural Economy

Of the options identified in the Issues and Options document, the Local Plan has progressed with Option 1, which is considered to provide a flexible approach to bring forward employment opportunities in the countryside, where they meet the policy requirements. This also reflects the general stance set out in the proposed ambition for rural areas, as set out in the Key Themes document. The approach included in the Local Plan also takes forward some of the elements of Option 2, such as the promotion of broadband telecommunications equipment.

The principle of identifying additional employment sites in the rural areas, as set out in Option 2 has not been taken forward, as this is not supported by the findings of the evidence base, including the Employment Land Review 2014, and it is considered that this could lead to unsustainable development taking place in the countryside, which could result in other impacts, such as increases in car usage. However, the Local Plan does provide scope to deliver sites to meet local needs, through the Neighbourhood Planning approach.

Issue 13 – Accessibility and Commuting

Of the options identified in the Issues and Options document, the Local Plan is most closely aligned to options 1, 2, 3 and 5 through the policies in the document and supported by appropriate infrastructure improvements in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This issue was explored in the Key Themes document, which considered the issues around the provision of infrastructure, including the scale and pace of its provision. Although options 4 and 6 of Issue 13 are not specifically referred to in the Local Plan, these are not specifically excluded and would be seen to be complementary to other measures designed to address congestion issues and improve accessibility.

Issue 14 – Maintaining Vitality and Viability

Of the options identified in the Issues and Options document, option 2 has specifically been taken forward through an amendment to the town centre boundary and a more flexible approach to uses in the Basing View strategic employment area. This was

explored in a specific section of the Key Themes document, which considered issues around maintaining town and district centres, including a proposed extension to the town centre boundary. Option 2 was considered to be the most appropriate approach as it helps to support the vitality and viability of the town centre, accommodate changing needs over the plan period and contribute towards the regeneration of Basing View. The extended town centre boundary also helps to resist town centre uses from coming forward in out-of-centre locations, which may serve to undermine the vitality of the town centre.

The other options were not taken forward due to:

- The requirement for additional retail floorspace over the plan period
- The identified need to facilitate the regeneration of Basing View;
- Impacts on flexibility over the plan period; and
- Certain areas of the town becoming single use, with implications in terms of vitality and viability and safety.

Option 4 was not specifically taken forward, as this form of development can come forward through the approach in the Local Plan (i.e. in the extended town centre boundary), or in other areas, where it is possible to demonstrate that there are no sequentially preferable sites.

Issue 15 – Reducing Our Carbon Footprint and Adapting to Climate Change

Of the two options set out in the Issues and Options document, the Local Plan takes forward an approach which uses elements of both approaches, including policies to require that developments meet level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in terms of indoor water consumption (equates to a maximum of 105 litres per person per day) and achieve the Code for Sustainable Homes credit for external water use, and policies that support the provision of renewable energy and reductions in carbon dioxide gases. The Local Plan also includes a policy which requires development proposals to minimise energy consumption through sustainable approaches to design. This issue was explored in some detail in the Key Themes document, which included a specific proposed ambition about tackling climate change, in addition to detailed questions around how the issue could be addressed. The Local Plan includes detailed policies that set out the required approach in this subject area, and also includes site based policies which require that use is made of Combined Heat and Power opportunities where suitable.

Issue 16 – Reducing Waste and Pollution

The Local Plan takes forward option 1. It does not include a specific policy to encourage recycling and waste reduction (option 2), as this is considered to be an issue which is addressed by other aspects of the borough council's work, and that of Hampshire County Council as the local planning authority with responsibility for waste. However, the design policy and transport policy require the provision of adequate waste and recycling areas and features to facilitate recycling. The Local Plan includes a policy on pollution associated with new development.

Issue 17 – Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Environment

Of the two options set out in the Issues and Options document, the Local Plan takes forward option 1, which seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment, including landscape and biodiversity. This was also explored in the Key Themes document in relation to the proposed ambition, which included an approach of protecting and enhancing key habitats. Elements of option 2 have also been taken forward, such as the requirement to maintain the integrity of settlements, and a specific policy on strategic gas has been included within the plan. Designated sites include Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest continue to be protected through the policies in the Local Plan.

Issue 18 – The Water Environment

The Local Plan takes forward elements of both of the options set out in the Issues and Options document, which are not mutually exclusive. There is a specific policy requiring standards to be met in terms of indoor water consumption and external water use. This matter was considered in and informed by the responses to the Key Themes document.

In addition, through the approach to flooding in the Local Plan, there is a requirement to make use of sustainable drainage systems in appropriate locations, which also develops the issues explored in the Key Themes document.

Issue 19 – Maintaining and Enhancing Our Built Environment

Of the options set out in the Issues and Options document, the Local Plan is most closely aligned to option 2, through a specific policy to ensure that design is of a high quality. This matter was explored through the 'Accommodating Housing Needs' section of

the Key Themes document, and questions raised in the New Homes Consultation. Further detail on this issue is set out in a range of design guides to supplement the design policy. However, the Local Plan does not refer to an approach which includes design codes for larger sites.

Options 1, 3, 4 and 5 are not taken forward due to:

- A need to update and improve upon the existing design policy; and
- A need to avoid the approach of a blanket standard for density across the borough, which is more appropriately determined by taking into account local circumstances.

It should also be noted that elements of option 3 are being taken forward through local guides, such as conservation area appraisals and village design statements. .

Issue 20 – Affordable Housing

Of the two options put forward in the Issues and Options document, parts of both are being taken forward in the Local Plan. This policy applies an approach which sets a target of 40% on all development sites across the borough but factors in flexibility in relation to the viability of schemes and also whether the provision is to be on or off-site or financial contribution. The approach sets out the circumstances for the flexibility to be applied.

This approach was progressed in light of new evidence in relation to the need for affordable housing in the borough identified in the SHMA and the latest viability study.

Issue 21 – Rural Exceptions

Since the publication of the Issues and Options document in 2008, there have been changes in policy at the national level, which now encourages communities to plan for their own needs through a Neighbourhood Planning approach. The Local Plan therefore embraces this new approach, which was considered in the 'Rural Areas' section of the Key Themes document. The approach in the Local Plan is comparable in some ways to option 1, but also provides scope for rural exception sites to come forward, as per

the approach set out in Option 2. The approach of the Local Plan also facilitates an element of market homes to come forward to support the provision of affordable homes on exception sites and generally reflects the approach of 'bottom-up' planning.

Issue 22 – Housing Mix

The Local Plan takes an approach which is based on elements of all three options. It includes a range of considerations, such as local characteristics and site specifics which need to be considered on individual developments in order to provide a mix of homes. This issue has been explored through a number of consultations, including the New Homes consultation and the Key Themes, where a range of views were expressed about the types of homes which should be provided. This generally concluded that more houses were required, compared to flats, and that provision should be made for bungalows and older people in the borough.

Issue 23 – Deprivation, Social Inclusion, Regeneration and Renewal

The Local Plan takes forward an approach which is most closely aligned to Option 1, through the inclusion of a specific policy to support regeneration proposals, including within specific priority areas. This reflects work undertaken by the borough council through the Strategic Approach to Regeneration, and the issues explored in the Key Themes document. Further work will be undertaken to bring forward specific schemes through close working with the community and housing associations.

Issue 24 – Access to Services / Community Infrastructure

Of the three options identified, the Local Plan takes forward option 1 through the inclusion of a policy to resist the loss of facilities and to provide scope for exceptions schemes to come forward. This option may also be achieved through a Neighbourhood Planning approach (which the Local Plan provides scope for), in response to local needs, and reflects the issues explored in the Key Themes document, which sought to ensure that services and facilities are provided locally, particularly in rural areas.

Whilst the approach set out in option 2 would generally be supported by the borough council, the scope to achieve this as the Local Planning Authority may be limited.

Option 3 was not taken forward, as it was considered that without some form of planning policy protection, services and facilities of importance to local communities would be lost. This is likely to result in residents becoming more isolated, a greater need to travel, and potentially further reliance on the car.

Issue 25 – Access to Public and Community Transport

Of the two options identified, the Local Plan is most closely aligned to option 1, through the requirement for new development to be served by public transport, measures to bring forward travel plans and providing choices of travel modes. This reflects the issues that were also raised in the Key Themes document around the provision of public transport, particularly in rural areas.

While option 2 is likely to continue through other actions of the borough council, together with the county council, this is not directly related to the work of the Local Planning Authority.

Issue 26 – Creativity and Culture

Of the five options set out in the Issues and Options document linked to creativity and culture, option 3 is the most closely aligned to the approach set out in the Local Plan. This reflects the general approach set out in the Key Themes document, which asked specific questions around the provision of cultural facilities. A policy in the Local Plan seeks to protect such facilities, and provides a series of tests for proposals that would result in the loss of a facility.

Options 1, 2, 4 and 5 have not specifically been taken forward through the Local Plan due to the following:

- Limitations as to what the Local Planning Authority can achieve through the Local Plan;
- It is likely to be unreasonable to resist the loss of an existing cultural facility, where there may be justifiable reasons for permitting its loss;
- Separate work is being undertaken through the Central Area Vision to deliver improvements in terms of Basingstoke's cultural offer; and
- It is unlikely that there will be scope or desire to seek the relocation of existing cultural facilities to new locations in the borough.

Issue 27 – Access to the Countryside

The Local Plan takes forward both options set out in the Issues and Options document, providing the framework for the delivery of a country park to the wets of Basingstoke but also providing a policy framework for developing a useable network of accessible open spaces around Basingstoke and the borough's settlements. These issues were explored in the Key Themes document through questions around the provision of green infrastructure and linked up spaces for sport, recreation and biodiversity.

Issue 28 – Access to Community, Cultural and Leisure Facilities

The four options set out to improve access to community, cultural and leisure facilities are not mutually exclusive, and elements of options 1 and 2 are being taken forward through policies in the Local Plan to retain and promote local facilities to meet the needs of the community, and to provide these in a flexible manner to facilitate use by others. These approaches were explored in the Key Themes document, which sought to understand views around the provision of facilities, where these should be located and what approaches could be taken to achieve the proposed ambition.

Options 3 and 4 are not specifically being taken forward due to:

- More detailed work being undertaken on the Central Area Vision for Basingstoke Town; and
- More detailed work being undertaken through the Green Infrastructure Strategy to provide improved access to the countryside.

Issue 29 – Youth Facilities

Of the four options put forward in the Issues and Options document, elements of option 1, 2 and 3 are being progressed through the Local Plan. This seeks to ensure that existing facilities are protected and enhanced in general, that new facilities are provided in new developments in line with the IDP, and that other opportunities for leisure activities for young people are provided through appropriate strategies such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy which aims to improve informal facilities such as cycleways and areas of open space. . This matter was also explored through the Key Themes document, which considered what types of facility should be provided, what the priorities are and how these could be improved in the future.

Issue 30 – Open Space Provision

Of the five options put forward in the Issues and Options document, elements of options 3, 4 and 5 are being progressed through the Local Plan, which includes a policy to protect and enhance open space, and provides a framework to consider proposals to re-use open space for alternative uses if specific policy criteria are met. The policy is closely linked to the Green Infrastructure Strategy which aims to provide improved access to the countryside and recreational opportunities, and includes a requirement for new development to make provision for open space and play, including any types of open space that may be needed locally. This issue was considered in the Key Themes document, including the best means of improving open space provision and how this can be balanced with other objectives, such as habitats for wildlife.

By default, the policy does not take forward option 1, which seeks the blanket protection of all open space, and in doing so, this recognises that there may be some situations where it is appropriate to allow the loss of open space, for example, where it is not usable, or alternative provision may be more suitable.