

Tuesday 1st Feb workshop - responses to main points raised by members

Housing target and impact of phosphate pollution issue.

The NPPF makes clear that Strategic policies should provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs. Government policy requires the use of the “standard method” as the means to determine objectively assessed needs for housing. A test of soundness, against which the plan will be judged at Examination in Public, is compliance with National Policy. On this basis a “no growth” option was not be regarded as a reasonable alternative.

The Plan is for 20 years and the Council and partner organisations are working hard to resolve the issue of phosphate levels in the River systems to enable the release of housing in the early part of the plan period. This should enable the housing target to be achieved. If robust evidence demonstrates that the housing target cannot be achieved there would need to be a discussion with neighbouring authorities regarding meeting housing needs across a wider area. If this is still not possible the Council would need to present the evidence at EIP to demonstrate why its housing target could not be met in full.

Rural growth levels set out in the options.

The Housing Market and Needs Assessment (HMANA) provided the baseline figures based on an analysis of needs across the County and included market research with local estate agents and letting agents within the local housing market areas. Subsequent options provide estimates based upon the development of different policy positions directing the distribution of housing growth across the County.

The results of the consultation responses and emerging evidence base work will help to determine the final settlement hierarchy and level of growth proposed.

Economic growth and employment land provision

Work to determine the need for additional employment land and type is being undertaken in parallel and will be a factor used to determine the preferred approach in the plan. This work will include an assessment of how the economy is likely to evolve over the plan period and different patterns of economic activity across the county.

New settlement option

At present there are no locations identified for a new settlement, but work will be undertaken to identify potential locations for such a proposal if the new settlement option is a preferred approach.

If such a proposal is developed within the plan it will only deliver housing on the second half of the plan period and will continue beyond 2041 and could provide the basis ultimately for a small eco town with good transport links including rail links.

Size of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

AONBs constitute around 15-20% of the area of the County but have less than 10% of the settlements currently identified for potential development in the Core Strategy.

Combining elements of different options

The options are currently set out as a range discrete alternatives, however it is very likely that the final spatial strategy will be made up from a combination of elements from more than one option.

Windfall development and agricultural conversions.

Agricultural conversions have accounted for around 50 dwellings per annum over a considerable period of time. With many of such developments now falling within permitted development rights this is likely to continue to be a source of housing in future years. The level of windfall is likely to depend on which option is chosen an option which proposes a wide dispersal of new development is likely to result in a greater level of windfall than an option proposing a concentration of development in a few number of larger settlements.

The Climate emergency

The vision and objectives set out in the paper make clear the importance of the climate emergency in preparing the Plan as a cross-cutting theme which will apply throughout the policies and proposals of the plan.

Context for developing the options and ensuring sustainability

The vision and objectives of the plan set out the context for the plan's background and will also help to determine the preferred option.

For rural areas a matrix of numerous factors, based on the availability of services and facilities, is being developed and will be set out in the Rural Background Paper as part of a future consultation.

Future Developer contributions

Government are still indicating they will bring forward a new scheme for developer contributions to replace S106 and CIL (Levelling up White Paper)

Provision of an appropriate level of infrastructure

Various evidence base work will be developed together with engagement and consultation with utility providers and statutory consultees to ensure that the provision of any necessary infrastructure is developed alongside any development proposals in the plan.