

# APPENDIX K

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE 1 DECEMBER 2009

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**Title:**

**PROPOSED CONSULTATION ON THE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Richard Gates]**

**[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

The next stage in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy is the consultation on the further housing options. The purpose of this report is to seek authority to consult on the proposed options set out in the accompanying paper. The Executive is also asked to agree the arrangements for the consultation itself.

**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The Council's approach to delivering the new housing required by the South East Plan will be a major element of the LDF Core Strategy. At this stage, the purpose is to identify the options to consult on. Whatever option is ultimately chosen will have implications in relation to the corporate priorities regarding the Environment, Affordable Housing, Improving Lives and Leisure.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

It will be necessary to ensure that equality and diversity implications of both the methods of consultation and the identified housing options take account of the implications for equality and diversity.

**Resource/Value for Money implications:**

As with other consultations, there will be some financial and other resource implications in terms of running an effective consultation on the housing options. It is considered that this can be managed within existing budgets and staff resources.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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**Introduction**

1. Members will know that we are reaching an important stage in the development of the LDF Core Strategy. One of the key issues dealt with in the Core Strategy

will be the Council's approach to delivering the new housing required by the South East Plan. Preparations are being made for a further consultation on the options for the distribution of this new housing.

2. Following the Member Briefing in July and two meetings of the Planning Policy SIG, five options have been identified for consultation. Government advice in Planning Policy Statement (PPS)12 states that being able to demonstrate that the Plan (the Core Strategy) is the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives, delivers confidence in the strategy. It adds that Local Planning Authorities should seek out and evaluate reasonable alternatives promoted by themselves and others.

### **Background**

3. Members are reminded that between February and April this year, consultation took place on some Topic Papers for the Core Strategy, inviting comments on the issues and options for a range of matters that will be considered in the Core Strategy. These Topic Papers dealt with the following:-
  - **Town and Country** – presented options regarding the amount and location of new housing and identified the issues regarding infrastructure and access to services.
  - **Living and Working** – identified issues and options relating to housing need and demand, employment and town centres and shopping. It also identified issues regarding leisure, recreation and tourism.
  - **Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change** – this set out issues and options on a range of matters regarding landscape and townscape, biodiversity and how the Council should address climate change issues, particularly in the design and construction of new development.
4. In addition, one Topic Paper invited comments on the Spatial Portrait, the Core Strategy issues, the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives.

### **Feedback from the Consultation on the Core Strategy Topic Papers**

5. The consultation on the Core Strategy Topic Papers included some questions specifically relating to the amount and location of new housing and the related issue of “windfall” sites and the extent to which they should form part of the housing supply. The questions related to:
  - Whether the Council should plan to deliver the 5000 new homes required by the South East Plan or whether it should actively plan to deliver more than 5000 new homes?
  - Four broad options relating to the location of development.
  - Whether an allowance should be included for “windfall sites” in the overall housing strategy
  - Whether the Council should seek to control the release of unplanned windfall sites and if so, what type of windfall sites.
6. Attached as **Annexe 1** to this report, is a summary of the consultation responses to these questions.

7. These responses have informed the development of the options that are now being consulted on. There are also other factors that have influenced the development of the options. These include:
  - The completion of evidence studies that were not available at the time of the Topic Paper consultation;
  - Further clarification of the extent to which windfall sites can be part of the housing supply;
  - The publication of the South East Plan in May 2009; and
  - The outcome of the planning appeal concerning the proposed development at Dunsfold Park.
8. As a result, the housing options now proposed for consultation differ from the earlier Topic Paper consultation in the following respects:
  - There is no longer an option proposed that would involve all the required housing taking place within settlements. Instead, what is common to all the options is that a proportion of the required housing will take place within the four main settlements of Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh, and the options are about how to deal with any shortfall between what can be provided within these settlements and the overall housing target.
  - There are separate options for dealing with any shortfall through a single urban extension or a freestanding new settlement (previously these were combined into a single option).
9. Importantly this consultation will be accompanied by evidence in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This will consider potential within settlements and also identify some possible locations for greenfield releases, should it be necessary to release greenfield sites to meet the housing target.
10. In relation to the amount of housing, Annexe 1 summarises the response to the relevant question asked in the Topic Paper consultation. Officers have noted the arguments put forward concerning the amount of housing to plan for. It is clearly a matter for the Council to decide whether it wants to plan for the 5000 new homes or whether it wants to actively plan for a higher number. The arguments for planning for more than 5000 new homes include the high level of identified need for affordable housing in Waverley and the demand for market housing. There is also the fact that the South East Plan will be subject to an early review to consider higher levels of house building across the South East.
11. On the other hand, it will be a challenge delivering the 5000 new homes, given the shift in national policy away from windfalls and the implications for Waverley in terms of possible greenfield releases. Moreover, Waverley is not a sub-region or growth area within the South East Plan and is not seen as a focus for growth. Whilst it may be the case that a revised South East Plan will require higher levels of housing, that is not the case now. In the Officers' view, therefore, it would be reasonable to focus on the immediate task of delivering the housing required by the approved South East Plan (i.e. the 5000 new homes).
12. Nor is it considered that there are any further options regarding windfall sites that need to be tested at this time. Based on evidence from other LDF examinations,

including the recent Core Strategy Examination at Mole Valley, it is clear that there needs to be a very good reason for including windfall sites in the supply, particularly in the first 10 years. In Waverley's case, Officers consider that there may be justification for including an allowance for windfall sites post 10 years. However, officers will also continue to monitor the emergence of practice and guidance on this issue before coming to a final view on the windfall issue when the Core Strategy itself is consulted on.

### **The Further Housing Options For Consultation**

13. Attached as **Annexe 2** to this report is a draft of the Background Paper that would form part of the proposed consultation. This provides the necessary technical background and context for the options consultation. It also sets out the five options for consideration. It also explains that whatever option is preferred, it will be necessary to develop this further to take account of the constraints and opportunities that will have a bearing on the final identification of the preferred location for housing.
14. In summary, the proposed options for consultation are to meet any potential shortfall in the housing numbers through:
  - Selected releases of land around the four main settlements (Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh)
  - Selected releases of land around the four main settlements (as listed above) together with development within and potentially around Beacon Hill and Hindhead and the five largest villages (Bramley, Chiddingfold, Elstead, Milford and Witley)
  - Selected releases of land around the four main settlements and within and potentially around villages generally
  - Meeting the shortfall through a single urban extension to one of the main settlements
  - Meeting the shortfall through the development of a single new freestanding settlement.
15. It is important that feedback from this further consultation should assist the Council in determining the preferred approach to delivering the required new housing. Therefore, it is proposed that those responding to the consultation will have the opportunity to identify any additional options or a combination of options that the Council should consider
16. As explained above, Officers will continue to examine the scope to identify further opportunities to develop within settlements, principally through a review/update to the SHLAA. As part of this process, it is proposed that this further housing options consultation also be used as an opportunity to invite landowners, developers and other interested parties to identify specific sites that they believe should be considered. The housing supply situation is not static and officers will continue to monitor and update supply information to inform the development of the draft Core Strategy itself and the final Core Strategy to be submitted for Examination.

### **The Draft Consultation Strategy**

17. Officers are also keen to make this consultation as effective as possible, both through an increase in the overall level of response and through engaging with a wider range of residents and other stakeholders. Attached as **Annexe 3** is an outline of the proposed consultation, setting out some possible options for how the consultation will be managed. Those wishing to respond will be encouraged to use the online facility. However, there will still be the opportunity for responses to be made in writing.
18. It is envisaged that the consultation material will be focussed on a summary document, setting out the options for comment. The Background Paper attached to this report will also be available to view, download etc. for those wanting more technical information on the options. In addition, the key evidence studies will also be available to view/download, particularly the SHLAA, the Employment Land Review (ELR), the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Draft Settlement Hierarchy.
19. In terms of widening and increasing the level of response, officers are still assessing the best options, taking into account the resources available. However, it is envisaged that this will include the distribution of leaflets/posters drawing attention to the consultation. For example, Officers envisage circulating these at busy locations such as supermarkets and train stations. Officers are also aiming to target the local radio stations in addition to the local newspapers in order to widen the publicity of the consultation. Direct mailing of those on our LDF consultation database will continue and officers are also updating their list of specific groups/organisations that should also be targeted, such as the Youth Council.

### **The Draft Settlement Hierarchy**

20. The Settlement Hierarchy considers the sustainability of the various settlements in Waverley, based principally on an assessment of the different services and facilities they have, the access to public transport etc. It also identifies the potential constraints to development, such as Green Belt etc. The earlier draft of the Settlement Hierarchy was included in the Topic Paper consultation that took place earlier this year. The document has since been updated to incorporate comments made in response to that consultation. It is proposed that a further draft of the Settlement Hierarchy will be available alongside the consultation on the further Housing options.

### **Conclusions**

21. The consultation on further housing options has evolved from the earlier Topic Paper consultation and including contributions from Members at the Briefing in July and subsequent meetings of the Planning Policy SIG. It has also been informed by other factors such as the final publication of the South East Plan and the outcome of the Dunsfold Park appeal. Members are reminded that authority is being sought to consult on the options and that at this stage members are not being asked to identify which option is preferable.

22. As the consultation material can only be finalised once the options themselves are agreed, officers have included a recommendation that agreement of the final details of the consultation arrangements, including the specific material that will be consulted on, be delegated to the Head of Planning Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

**Recommendation:**

That the Executive:-

1. agree the Housing Options set out in Annexe 2 to this report as the basis for public consultation; and
2. authorise the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, to approve the detailed arrangements for the consultation, including the consultation material, based on Annexe 3.

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**Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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