

AGENDA ITEM 9: APPENDIX D

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 02/09/2014

Title:

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT GUILDFORD LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY AND SITES

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Brian Adams]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

Guildford Borough Council is consulting on its draft Local Plan Strategy and Sites document. This follows the consultation that took place towards the end of last year on the Local Plan Issues and Options. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Executive to the proposed response to the consultation.

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

The new Local Plan for Guildford and its policies have the potential to impact on Waverley and in turn on the Council's corporate priorities.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial considerations arising specifically from the response to this consultation document.

Legal Implications:

Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to co-operate and engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to the preparation of development plan documents and the preparation of other local development documents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 178 of the NPPF also places a duty on public bodies to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to strategic priorities.

Paragraph 179 requires Local Planning Authorities to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans.

Paragraph 181 states that “Local Planning Authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination.

Cooperation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation, resulting in a final position where plans are in place to provide the land and infrastructure necessary to support current and projected future levels of development”.

Introduction

1. Guildford Borough Council is consulting on its draft Local Plan Strategy and Sites document. The consultation runs until 22 September 2014. The new Local Plan for Guildford will be in two parts. This first part sets out the vision, aims and strategy, including overarching policies for the Borough up to 2031. It also includes the allocation of specific sites for different types of development, including housing and employment. The second part of the Local Plan, which will come later, will include more detailed policies for development management. The current timetable for the Strategy and Sites document includes its submission for examination in Spring 2015 and adoption, following examination, in Autumn 2015.

Background

2. In November the Executive agreed the Council’s response to the earlier Issues and Options paper for the Guildford Local Plan. A copy of that response is attached for information as Annexe 1 to this report.
3. The focus in that response and in the proposed response to the current draft Local Plan is on matters where there may be implications for Waverley. Of all the neighbouring authorities, Guildford probably exerts the greatest influence on Waverley due to its size, its proximity and the range of facilities, services etc. For example, Waverley and Guildford are within the same housing market area. Other strategic cross boundary issues include:
 - Traffic/transport
 - The local economy
 - Other services and infrastructure, such as education and health
 - Green Belt and landscape matters
 - The impact of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, which affects both authorities.

Key components of the Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites

4. The Draft Plan contains 19 policies covering a range of matters including the scale and distribution of new development, the approach to the Green Belt and Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the economy (employment and retail) and infrastructure.

5. It includes a housing target of 652 homes per annum from 2011 to 2031 (13,040 homes in total), which equates to the full need as assessed in the draft Guildford Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA) of 671 homes p.a. minus a small amount to account for the impact of students on housing need. To help achieve this figure, Guildford has reviewed its Green Belt boundary. One of the sites identified for release and development directly adjoins the Borough boundary at Farncombe, but this is consistent with Waverley's own Green Belt review which recommends the release of a small area of Green Belt land at Farncombe adjacent to the site Guildford intends to release.
6. The draft plan includes over 100 sites to be allocated, mainly for housing, but also for other uses such as traveller pitches and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). These include several large urban extensions (totalling 5,000 dwellings) plus a freestanding settlement of about 2,000 homes at the former Wisley airfield. The three largest sites all adjoin the A3, and the cumulative effect of the additional traffic generated will inevitably result in many more vehicles using this already busy road.
7. The considerable effort that Guildford has made in seeking to meeting its full housing need requirement should be acknowledged, although it will be essential to ensure that the impact of this development on Waverley is addressed and mitigated. This is particularly the case for development sites close to the boundary between Guildford and Waverley and major housing sites elsewhere.
8. It is not necessary for Waverley to comment on all matters included in the document, as many do not have implications for Waverley. Attached as Annexe 2 is the suggested response on those policies where officers believe that there could be an impact on Waverley.
9. Going forward, officers continue to believe that it is essential to work closely with Guildford as the respective Local Plans are developed. This is required by the duty to co-operate and the importance of this cannot be underestimated. There is still uncertainty over whether the final joint West Surrey SHMA will result in a different number of homes needed in the three authorities. If this shows a higher number for Guildford, officers consider that Guildford's approach to meeting all of their needs should continue, given the environmental constraints that exist in Waverley.

Conclusion

The Executive is asked to endorse the comments set out in Annexe 2 as the Council's response to the consultation.

Recommendation

That the Executive agrees the response to the consultation from Guildford Borough Council as set out in Annexe 2 to the report.

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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