

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION
REFERENCE IMD: 2015/23**

TITLE	Council's response to the Consultation by Woking Borough Council on their Draft Site Allocations Local Plan
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Councillor John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning & Highways
ON	Thursday 30 July 2015
TIME	9am
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director for the Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That the final Woking Borough Site Allocations Local Plan has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Highways:

- 1) approves the comments outlined in this report; and
- 2) that the comments be submitted as a formal response to the consultation from Woking Borough Council on their Draft Site Allocations Local Plan.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Woking Borough Council's Draft Site Allocations Local Plan details their how they envisage meeting the need for housing, commercial (offices, factories, shops) and social (education and recreational) development required by their Core Strategy (October 2012) over the period 2010 to 2027. Woking Borough is consulting upon their document from 18 June until 31 July 2015.

The proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation is that the Council should:

- Raise a concern on the basis that insufficient land is proposed for removal from Woking Borough's Green Belt to accommodate particularly long term growth (2027-2040).
- Raise a concern that the allocation of two sites for residential development will prejudice maintaining the supply of aggregates to meet demand in Surrey, which could have a negative impact on Wokingham Borough These sites are the rail aggregates depot off Guildford Road, Woking and land at West Hall, Parvis Road, West Byfleet; and
- Advise that Woking Borough consult other minerals planning authorities to assess their views on the plan.

Background

Woking Borough Council indicates that the Draft Site Allocations Local Plan is designed to implement the spatial vision and objectives of their Core Strategy. This indicates that between 2010 and 2027, the following should be delivered in Woking Borough: 4,964 net additional dwellings, 28,000 sq.m of additional office floorspace, 20,000 sq.m of warehouse floor space, 93,600 sq.m of retail floorspace and 19 pitches to meet the needs of Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Analysis of Issues

Addressing housing needs

Woking Borough's Draft Site Allocation document proposes the removal of sites from its Green Belt to both meet development needs identified in its Core Strategy to 2027 and also the potential requirements from 2027-2040.

However, as the table below indicates, the current annual housing requirement for Woking Borough could change, i.e. increase through a future plan to address the need identified in their Draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which is scheduled to be finalised during 2015.

Document	Time period	Annual dwelling requirement
Core Strategy	2010 – 2027	292
Draft SHMA	2011 – 2031	390 to 588

Conclusion - To ensure increased housing pressure is not placed on authorities outside of south-west Surrey's housing market, it is important that Woking Borough's approach to reviewing Green Belt boundaries adequately addresses the potential needs likely to be generated in the south-west Surrey SHMA. Their approach does not appear to do this. It is therefore recommended that Wokingham Borough Council expresses concern that Woking Borough's amendment to its Green Belt does not adequately address its potential long term development needs.

Minerals

There are two further areas of concern, one regarding the storage/transportation of minerals and the other regarding a potential extraction site.

Storage/transportation site

One of the sites provisionally allocated in the Draft Site Allocations Document for around 422 dwellings between 2015 and 2027 is an aggregates rail yard off Guildford Road in Woking (site UA41). The aggregates yard is allocated in the County Council's Local Plan for the off-loading of aggregates from rail and short term storage prior to distribution by road around Surrey.

The Surrey Local Aggregates Assessment 2014 indicates that in 2009, Surrey consumed about 990,000 tonnes of aggregate of which around 745,000 tonnes arrived by rail.

Woking's yard off-loads 300,000 tonnes of aggregate (marine sand and gravel together with crushed rock) annually. Its loss will have an impact on the road network by having to transport minerals further by road, i.e. from other rail depots including potentially those at Theale (between Reading and Newbury within West Berkshire).

The 300,000 tonnes of aggregates off-loaded annually at Woking's rail yard would be equivalent to around 66,400 HGV movements a year (or roughly 265 movements daily (based on Monday-Friday operation)).

Conclusion - Therefore, Wokingham Borough Council is concerned that the redevelopment of the aggregates rail yard should only occur if adequate alternative facilities have been provided in Surrey as otherwise there could be increased HGV movements through Wokingham borough.

Potential extraction site

Woking borough has allocated surrounding West Hall, Parvis Road, West Byfleet (site GB15). This is also identified in the County Council's Local Plan as a concrete aggregate safeguarding site.

The 2009 national aggregate movement's survey indicated that Berkshire was a net exporter of sand and gravel (also referred to as concrete aggregates) to Surrey. The 2014 Local Aggregate Assessment indicates that Surrey has the 7 year land bank of sand and gravel reserves required by paragraph 145 of the NPPF. However, for this to continue until 2026 further sand and gravel quarries need to be approved in Surrey from the list of sites currently safeguarded, such as the West Hall site.

Conclusion - Therefore, since the land adjoining West Hall is safeguarded for potential extraction of sand and gravel, it is essential that the minerals are extracted before it is redeveloped. This therefore this will reduce pressure on Wokingham Borough for meeting Surrey sand and gravel needs. Therefore, Wokingham Borough Council considers that development of the land adjoining West Hall should only occur once the aggregates have been extracted.

Engagement with mineral planning authorities

It is advised that Woking Borough Council consults other minerals planning authorities as they may have similar concerns to Wokingham Borough.

Continual engagement with Woking Borough

Wokingham Borough Council would welcome the opportunity to work with Woking Borough Council to assess if solutions to the issues identified can be delivered.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	None	Yes	N/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	None	Yes	N/a

Following Financial Year (Year 3)	None	Yes	N/a
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Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
The budget is based on what we know at this point of time. Further issues, including any arising from future versions of Woking Borough's Site Allocation Local Plan, could have financial implications.

Cross-Council Implications
The identification of sufficient land to meet long term development needs in Woking borough will reduce the likelihood that a shortfall would have to be addressed outside of that authority and therefore minimise impacts for service delivery within Wokingham Borough.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director - Resources	No response received
Monitoring Officer	No response received
Leader of the Council	No response received

List of Background Papers
<p>Consultation documents from Woking Borough Council on their Draft Site Allocations Local Plan: see - http://www.woking2027.info/allocations.</p> <p>Draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment for South-West Surrey – see: http://www.guildford.gov.uk/shma.</p> <p>Surrey Local Aggregates Assessment 2014, see http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/minerals-and-waste-policies-and-plans/minerals-and-waste-planning-annual-monitoring-report. Error!</p> <p>Bookmark not defined.</p>

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Date 20 July 2015	Version No. 7