

East Herts and North Herts Duty to Cooperate Meeting

NHDC Offices, Letchworth: 21/07/2015

Cllr Linda Haysey (LH)	Leader, East Herts District Council (EHDC)
Chris Butcher (CB)	Principal Planning Officer, East Herts District Council (EHDC)
Isabelle Haddow (IH)	Senior Planning Officer, East Herts District Council (EHDC)
Cllr David Levett (DL)	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enterprise, North Herts District Council (NHDC)
Richard Kelly (RK)	Principal Strategic Planning Officer, North Herts District Council (NHDC)
Chris Carter (CC),	Senior Planning Officer, North Herts District Council (NHDC)
Louise Symes (LS)	Strategic Planning and Projects Manager, North Herts District Council (NHDC)

Introductions

District/Local Plan Issues

NHDC Timeline:

1. NHDC held a consultation on a Preferred Options Local Plan earlier this year and are currently in the process of analysing the responses received. It is anticipated that a further consultation will take place later this year, although it is uncertain what form this will take at this stage. The updated SHMA for North Herts and Stevenage identifies an objectively assessed housing need figure for North Herts District of 14,400 dwellings for the period up to 2031.
2. RK explained that the draft Local Plan included a site to the East of Luton which would provide 2,100 dwellings towards Luton's unmet housing need. NHDC will be monitoring the implications of a Growth Study which is being undertaken by Central Bedfordshire and Luton.
3. CB asked where the NHDC strategic sites are. RK outlined that apart from the site to the East of Luton, there are proposals for strategic scale development to the north and south of Baldock as well as to the north of Stevenage. RK clarified that the site to the west of Stevenage is being saved for future housing needs outside of this plan period.

EHDC timeline:

4. EHDC is currently anticipating a consultation on a Pre-Submission draft in early 2016. HCC has recently indicated that the capacity of the A414 corridor may be highly constrained, particularly as it passes through Hertford. This could impact on the deliverability of various proposed sites within the A414 corridor. HCC has indicated that the impact of proposed development could be 'severe' on the basis

that it may result in queuing on the A10 to get onto the A414, as well as increased congestion and air quality issues in Hertford. EHDC is awaiting further clarification from HCC with regards to how much development could be catered for without a strategic intervention such as a Hertford bypass.

5. CB explained that identifying a sufficient number of sites to deliver housing in the first five years of the Plan period is proving particularly challenging. For these reasons, EHDC is continuing to assess different options, including the potential for some development to the East of Stevenage.
6. **Other sites:** EHDC and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council are working jointly on proposals for development to the East of Welwyn Garden City. The draft District Plan included provision for 1,700 dwellings within East Herts District in this location. It is currently anticipated that the entire 1,700 dwellings would count towards the East Herts housing target.
7. CB and IH outlined that two applications in Buntingford will be determined by the Secretary of State later in the year. There is also one remaining planning application to the south-west of Buntingford that is yet to be determined. EHDC has commissioned a Transport Model to assess the cumulative impact of development on the town, and to identify any appropriate mitigation measures. It is currently expected that the report will be published in September. RK noted the relationship between Buntingford and Royston, particularly in terms of the implications for Buntingford's growth on health services and the A10.

Stevenage Housing Numbers Consultation

8. EHDC has responded to Stevenage's consultation in support of the higher housing figure and CB provided a hard copy to NHDC officers. NHDC will be responding to the consultation shortly.

Evidence Base

SHMA

9. Consultants are currently preparing a SHMA covering East Herts, Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping Forest. It is hoped that this will be presented to Members in September or October.

Green Belt Review

10. Peter Brett Associates have been commissioned to undertake a Green Belt Review for EHDC. It is currently anticipated that the report will be presented to the September District Plan Panel meeting.
11. NHDC completed an in-house Green Belt review which was published alongside the Local Plan consultation.

Infrastructure

12. CC explained that NHDC is updating their Infrastructure Delivery Plan to reflect current needs. CC expressed some concern regarding future NHS England contacts and communication with other NHS bodies.

13. NHDC explained that as part of the evidence for the draft consultation, transport models were run using the SHUM transport model. HCC has indicated that further work may need to be completed and extended. However, NHDC is uncertain whether further patch testing will suffice for HCC.
14. It was agreed that the update from Rye Meads Sewage Treatment Works gave enough certainty for the Districts that there is sufficient capacity to cater for expected growth across the wider area.
15. CB explained that EHDC has commissioned a Delivery Study to assess the overall deliverability and viability of the draft District Plan. Given the delays experienced with transport modelling work, it is likely that the Delivery Study will need to be updated prior to Examination of the District Plan.

AOB

16. Gypsy and Travellers – LH raised this as a discussion point. RK explained that they have completed an assessment which has identified a need of 6-8 pitches over the Plan period with no Travelling Showpeople needs. There is a site that is considered to be able to accommodate NHDC's Gypsy and Traveller needs, however there are enforcement issues on this site that are being worked through currently.
17. EHDC's level of need is 12 pitches over the Plan period, with a need of 7 pitches to be accommodated in the first five years. EHDC also needs to provide 7 Travelling Showpeople pitches, one of which needs to be identified in the first five years. EHDC is struggling to accommodate their need within the first five years.

Neighbourhood Plans

18. NHDC explained that there are a few neighbourhood plans going on across the District, however no towns have approached the Council to undertake a neighbourhood plan. This may partly be because the towns are not parished.
19. EHDC has a number of on-going neighbourhood plans. The Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Wards NP has recently been adopted with other neighbourhood plans taking place across the District at varying stages. IH explained that within the draft District Plan, Category 1 villages are being encouraged to produce neighbourhood plans to identify a minimum of 10% growth within the plan period.

Close of meeting.