

Committee: Local Plan Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 1 November 2013

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Title: Additional Housing Sites

Author: Melanie Jones, Principal Planning Officer,
Ext 461

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report follows on from the report considered by the Working Group on 17 October which identified a need to provide additional housing in the new Local Plan to comply with Government guidance and meet the objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in the District. The report looks at a number of options for delivering the additional housing required and makes a recommendation as to how this could be met.

Recommendations

2. That Members consider the following sites as additional sites for further consultation.
 - a. Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden
 - b. Land to the west of Great Dunmow, South of Stortford Road
 - c. Land at Helena Romanes School
 - d. Land north east of Elsenham

Financial Implications

3. The cost of additional consultation will be met from existing budgets:

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The additional sites will be subject to consultation in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement
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Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	The consultation paper will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment in accordance with corporate requirements.
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	The additional sites have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal – this is available on the Council’s website
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden Castle, Great Dunmow North, Great Dunmow South, Elsenham and Henham
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6. The process of selecting additional sites should be based on the results of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the available evidence base.
7. The sites which scored well in the SHLAA are considered under three options:
 - Option A - maintaining the same approach as in the draft local plan. This would mean looking again for additional sites in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and the key villages on the basis that this is where the services and facilities are available
 - Option B - increasing the amount of development further down the hierarchy e.g. more development in Type A villages with some local services. This could be extended to the Type B villages but the scale of development in these villages is likely to be limited because of the lack of facilities. There may be some potential in Type B villages with good accessibility to larger centres.
 - Option C – A strategy which allows for larger scale development in the Market Towns and/or one or more key villages.
 - Option D - A new settlement
8. While there are some suitable sites available to meet the additional housing need there are not enough sites to meet the increased scale of need under options A and B above. It is clear that a larger scale development in one or more settlements needs to be considered.

9. Para 52 of the NPPF suggests “the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish green belt around or adjoining any such new development.”
10. The Council’s view is still that a completely new settlement option would not be appropriate for the reasons highlighted above. The settlement hierarchy approach is preferred because it delivers housing, including affordable housing throughout the district. Additional infrastructure will be provided in all the Market Towns and Key Villages as a result of the development now being proposed.
11. The additional housing requirement of 2,680 homes should be met by:
- a. Releasing part of the employment site at Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden for housing to deliver a mixed scheme including new high quality employment floorspace. (170)
 - b. Including an additional site on the western edge of Dunmow (south of the B1256 and north of the Flitch Way) (400)
 - c. Allowing the redevelopment of Helena Romanes School in Great Dunmow to provide an enabling development to finance the delivery of a new secondary school (100)
 - d. Including land North east of Elsenham as an extension to the existing village (2100)
12. These additional sites will be subject to public consultation. Evidence relating to the current sites will need to be updated to consider impacts arising from the new sites and any cumulative impacts e.g. in relation to highways, education, water. This will be done during and following the consultation process and the information made available alongside the Pre-Submission Plan when it is published for consultation in 2014. The purpose of the pre-submission consultation is to highlight any outstanding issues with the plan which will be considered by the Inspector at the Examination which is currently anticipated to be in the autumn 2014. If the Inspector finds the plan to be a sound plan after considering the evidence presented at the examination the Council can adopt the plan early in 2015.

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
If additional sites	3 If the new	3.The plan	To include the

are not identified the plan will not provide enough housing to meet the objectively assessed need	local plan does not deliver enough housing it is unlikely to be found sound.	cannot be adopted, there will be further delays and the council will still be vulnerable to speculative planning applications	additional sites following a period of consultation.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.