

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 15 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

DRAFT HARLOW STRATEGIC SITES ASSESSMENT, SEPTEMBER 2016

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report:

- To present to Members the Draft Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment, September 2016.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:	
(A)	The Draft Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment, September 2016, as detailed at Essential Reference 'B' to this report, be supported as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and
(B)	The Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to agree the final version of the document.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board was established in 2014 in order to provide a forum for joint working between the four local authorities that comprise the West Essex/East Herts housing market area (East Herts, Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest Councils).
- 1.2 Various technical assessments have been commissioned by the Co-op Board in order to inform the respective local plans. This report presents the draft version of the latest of these technical assessments known as the Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The purpose of the Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment is to present a high level strategic assessment of the potential suitability of sites on the periphery of Harlow, located within the

administrative areas of East Herts, Harlow and Epping Forest.

- 2.2 The sites that have been assessed have been submitted by developers or site promoters to the respective local authorities as part of the plan making process. It is therefore known that all sites assessed through this study are available for development.
- 2.3 A number of different criteria have been used in order to assess the suitability of sites. These include:
- Environmental constraints;
 - Landscape and Green Belt;
 - Heritage constraints;
 - Transport and accessibility;
 - Potential to facilitate regeneration; and
 - Infrastructure capacity.
- 2.4 In the context of East Herts, the sites considered are all located to the north of Harlow. The study concludes that nearly all of the sites are 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable', either as a whole or in part. The one exception is land north of Redricks Lane (site D) which was concluded to be unsuitable in its entirety due to the potential to cause the coalescence of Harlow, Sawbridgeworth and High Wych. It should be noted that consideration of these findings was addressed in detail within the Settlement Appraisal for the Gilston Area, which was presented to this Panel on 8th September. The Settlement Appraisal concluded that Sites A and E should form the site area of the Gilston Area development.
- 2.5 The Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment also presents evidence with regards to build out rates for strategic sites. This evidence concludes that development of the Gilston Area could deliver around 300 homes per year. This is broadly consistent with previous evidence gathered through the Delivery Study and advice received from the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS), which is part of the Homes and Community Agency.
- 2.6 Based on an assumption of 300 completions per year in this location, the study concludes that approximately 3,000 homes could be completed within the Gilston Area within the Plan period up to 2033. In the context of the wider Harlow area, the study advises that between 14,000 and 17,000 homes could be delivered in the Plan period (including 3,000 homes at the Gilston Area), providing that known strategic highway mitigation measures are provided including:

- A new Junction 7a on the M11;
- Upgrades to Junctions 7 and 8 on the M11;
- A Second River Stort Crossing
- Widening of the existing Stort Crossing

2.7 The study concludes that it is likely that more development could be provided on the periphery of Harlow beyond the Plan period, subject to the identification of further strategic highways mitigation measures through ongoing transport modelling work.

2.8 The Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment, which is located within **Essential Reference Paper B**, is currently in draft. As such, it is recommended that the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to agree the final version of the document in due course.

2.9 Essential Reference Papers

- ERP 'A': Corporate Issues and Consultation
- ERP 'B': Draft Harlow Strategic Sites Assessment, September 2016.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None.

Contact Member: Councillor Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council.
linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Kevin Steptoe – Head of Planning and Building Control, Extn: 1407
kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Chris Butcher – Principal Planning Officer, Extn: 1622. chris.butcher@eastherts.gov.uk