

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 15 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EAST HERTS DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN – VILLAGES – VILLAGES
APPRAISAL AND NEW DRAFT CHAPTER 10

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report:

- To present to Members a Settlement Appraisal for the Villages, together with a draft revised chapter, for subsequent incorporation into the Pre-Submission District Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE
PANEL: That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:**

(A)	The Villages Appraisal as detailed at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ to this report, be agreed; and
(B)	The draft revised Chapter 10 (Villages), as detailed in Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ to this report, be agreed as a basis for inclusion in the Pre-Submission District Plan.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council published its Draft District Plan Preferred Options for consultation for a period of twelve weeks between 27th February and 22nd May 2014.
- 1.2 The issues raised through the consultation with regard to the Villages Chapter were considered at Agenda Item 6.
- 1.3 The Villages Appraisal provides the Council’s justification for the proposed redrafted chapter having regard to the issues raised during the Preferred Options consultation and the consideration of further technical assessments.
- 1.4 **Essential Reference Paper ‘B’** contains the Villages Appraisal and **Essential Reference Paper ‘C’** contains the revised draft chapter.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Preferred Options District Plan presented a draft development strategy for the villages that used a village hierarchy to distribute development to the most sustainable villages in the District.
- 2.2 It was proposed that Group 1 Villages would together accommodate at least 500 new homes, with each village being required to deliver at least a 10% increase in housing stock (based on the 2011 Census), and Parish Councils being encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to deliver this level of growth. Due to the village of Watton-at-Stone being located within the Green Belt, two sites were proposed for release from the Green Belt to accommodate housing development in the village.
- 2.3 In addition, development in Group 2 Villages would be restricted to limited infill development whilst no development would be permitted in Group 3 Villages beyond that considered to be appropriate in the Green Belt and Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, such as rural exceptions affordable housing schemes.
- 2.4 This Villages Appraisal identifies how the proposed development strategy for the villages has been refined following the Preferred Options consultation. The revised draft chapter proposes that the village hierarchy approach is retained and Policies VILL1 and VILL2 have been updated to reflect the village groupings identified within the Final Village Hierarchy Study, August 2016.
- 2.5 The Group 1 Villages of Braughing, Hunsdon, Much Hadham, Standon and Puckeridge, and Walkern will continue to be expected to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock (based on the 2011 Census) over the 16-year period between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2033.
- 2.6 However, the proposed amendments to the Green Belt around Watton-at-Stone will no longer be made through the District Plan. The Plan will provide a strategic 'hook' which will state that Group 1 Villages that are inset from the Green Belt will be encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate to amend their Green Belt boundary through the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan to accommodate additional development especially where it contributes to wider sustainability objectives and the delivery of community benefits. This policy approach will apply to the

identified Group 1 Villages of Hertford Heath, Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets, and Watton-at-Stone.

- 2.7 Following further consideration of the village development strategy and its consistency with national policy in terms of the restrictive policy approach applied to development in Group 3 Villages, it is proposed that a more permissive approach is taken to development in Group 3 Villages. The NPPF promotes sustainable development in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, and the associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Rural Housing makes it clear that all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas.
- 2.8 Therefore, it is proposed that limited infill development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted in Group 3 Villages. In addition, small scale development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted in Group 2 Villages. This approach is considered to better reflect the aims of the NPPF, whilst allowing local communities to plan positively for the identified housing needs within their villages.
- 2.9 In addition, whilst the housing requirement to be delivered in villages remains the same at, at least 500 dwellings, it is now proposed that development across all villages will contribute to this figure, rather than just development from Group 1 Villages. This is due to there being a reduced number of villages identified as Group 1 Villages with a specific housing target, and to reflect the amended policy approach to village development whereby there is the opportunity for development to be delivered in a wider number of villages through the Neighbourhood Planning process.
- 2.10 The policies contained in the draft revised chapter set out the criteria that will be used to determine planning applications, across all village groupings.
- 2.11 Essential Reference Papers
- ERP 'A': Corporate Issues and Consultation
 - ERP 'B': Villages Appraisal
 - ERP 'C': Draft Chapter 10: Villages
- 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.

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