

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 13 OCTOBER 2016

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE STRATEGIC SPATIAL
OPTIONS FOR THE WEST ESSEX AND EAST HERTFORDSHIRE
HOUSING MARKET AREA, SEPTEMBER 2016

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

The purpose of this report is:

- To present to Members the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Strategic Spatial Options for the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area.

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

(A)	the Sustainability Appraisal of the Strategic Spatial Options for the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area as detailed at Essential Reference 'B' to the report submitted, be agreed as part of the evidence base to support the East Herts District Plan.
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1.0 Background

1.1 Members will be aware that this Council has been working with Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils through the Duty to Co-operate to identify the objectively assessed needs of the housing market area (HMA) and to explore options for meeting these needs across the HMA. Part of this work has involved undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal style assessment of the range of growth and locational options for delivering new housing.

1.2 A draft of this assessment was used to inform each authority's

formal Sustainability Appraisals and is now presented in this report in its final form. A copy of the assessment is included in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

2.0 Report

2.1 In response to the need to fulfil Duty to Co-operate requirements and to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross boundary impacts, the West Essex and East Hertfordshire authorities have explored options for meeting the objectively assessed housing need across the Housing Market Area. To support this process, AECOM have worked with the four authorities to:

- identify options for spatially distributing the housing need identified in the SHMA (2015), the DCLG 2012-based household projections and the August 2016 advice from ORS;
- provide an evidenced-based sustainability appraisal style assessment setting out the anticipated significant positive and negative impacts of each option and potential mitigation measures (where relevant); and
- facilitate the development of mechanisms to agree how each authority will work together on Duty to Co-operate matters in the future.

2.2 These activities are collectively referred to as the Strategic Spatial Options Study. It is anticipated that the three elements of the Study will provide a critical piece of evidence to the Planning Inspectorate demonstrating that the key strategic issue of housing growth has been robustly addressed and that the Duty to Co-operate has been clearly complied with.

2.3 As the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Strategic Spatial Options is not an appraisal of a 'Plan' per se, rather it appraises theoretical options, it was not undertaken in line with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. However, it has been undertaken in the spirit of the requirements and uses the same Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework as has been used for each local authority SA which comprises assessing each option against the following issues:

- Biodiversity
- Community and Wellbeing
- Economy and Employment
- Historic Environment
- Housing
- Land
- Landscape
- Low Carbon Development
- Transport
- Water

2.4 Part 3 of the assessment contains the assessment findings, considering the various alternative options against the SA framework. Part 4 of the assessment discusses the evidence base used to choose the preferred spatial option across the housing market area. Part 5 of the appraisal sets out the next steps of the sustainability appraisal process which have been incorporated into each authority's SA.

2.5 The assessment has informed the consideration of the possible cumulative impacts arising from growth across the housing market area. A key part of this assessment has been transport modelling which considers the impact arising from this growth on the wider transport network. This has improved understanding of the cross-boundary infrastructure required to mitigate the effects of this growth, which will form part of a Memorandum of Understanding with each relevant authority including Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils.

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

Sustainability Appraisal of the Strategic Spatial Options for the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area, September 2016

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