

PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT VALE OF AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN (REGULATION 19)

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Scrutiny Committee's comments on the attached Submission Draft of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

2 Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- 2.1 Note the attached Submission Draft of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and
- 2.2 Identify any issues it wishes to ask Cabinet to take into account when it considers the Submission Draft VALP in October 2017.

3 Supporting information

Background to the production of the Submission Draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

- 3.1 All local planning authorities are under a statutory obligation to prepare a local plan. The district does not have an up to date local plan. The last adopted local plan dates from 2004 and it does not therefore take into account the recent changes in Government planning policy. The Council has tried to prepare a replacement plan on a number of occasions and the most recent attempt was withdrawn following an examination in public in 2014. Since then the Council has been committed to delivering a new local plan and to ensuring that we meet the Government expectations that local plans are produced as soon as practicable.
- 3.2 An initial scoping consultation on the new Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) and call for sites took place in 2014, which led to a large number of development sites being suggested across the District. This was followed by an issues and options consultation in 2015, which looked at how 31,000 houses could be accommodated in the district to 2033. The council received over 700 responses to the issues and options consultation which contained over 4,500 comments, many of which were very detailed. All of these comments were summarised and are on the council's website. Where possible the content of those responses was taken into account in the preparation of the draft plan.
- 3.3 From July to September 2016 public consultation took place on the Draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Through the consultation, residents and other interested parties were able to comment on any aspect of the draft Plan, such as locations identified for new homes and jobs and the wording of policies.
- 3.4 Ten exhibitions were held across the district through the summer and a letter inviting people to respond was sent to those on the Local Plan consultation database. Further publicity and information was provided by way of press releases, leaflets, exhibitions and articles and social media promotions.
- 3.5 Some 1,600 responses were received from that consultation, with over 5,000 comments about the draft Plan and its supporting policies. A summary of the representations has been prepared and is also on the website, together with spreadsheets which detail the content of the responses. The main issues raised were:
- a) the overall level of housing

- b) meeting unmet need from other areas
 - c) the possible new settlement
 - d) developments on the edge of Milton Keynes
 - e) provision of infrastructure such as schools and roads
 - f) removal of land from the Green Belt
 - g) distribution of development across the District
 - h) level of development in the villages
- 3.6 Again consideration has been given to these points raised and taken into account in the preparation of the Submission Plan. A Consultation Statement, which details all the consultation activities in relation to the plan preparation, will be produced and submitted to the Secretary of State, alongside the plan.
- 3.7 Since the consultation on the draft plan, Officers have been analysing the comments and have commissioned and prepared a range of supporting technical evidence to further inform the submission draft of the plan, which is attached as Appendix 1. Discussions with other local authorities and relevant agencies have continued to ensure that all the latest evidence and information has been factored into the Submission version of the Plan.
- 3.8 In August 2017, we had an advisory visit from a representative of the Planning Inspectorate to help provide informal advice on the Submission Draft and the next stages of taking the plan through the examination process. The informal feedback was very useful and overall the Inspector was positive about the approach we were adopting and made some suggestions for further improvement to the way in which the information was presented in the final submission document.

Content of the Submission Draft VALP

- 3.9 A Local Plan has to set out where development can take place, areas that will be protected and policies that will be used to determine planning applications. To determine how much development is required in the Vale, the Council has undertaken a Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) in conjunction with the other Buckinghamshire Councils. This latest update to the HEDNA can be found on our website.
- 3.10 This sets out the levels of growth that we need to accommodate and the evidence shows that just to meet the district's own housing and employment needs, the plan will have to deliver 19,300 new homes and 26 hectares (ha) of employment land within the district up to 2033.
- 3.11 In addition to meeting our own needs in the local plan preparation, we have a formal Duty to Co-operate with other adjoining local planning authorities to work together on strategic issues which cross boundaries. This requires positive engagement with neighbouring authorities and other organisations, about issues such as housing numbers and employment requirements.
- 3.12 The Council is co-operating, particularly with other authorities in Buckinghamshire, over what evidence their plans should be based on. This has included:
- (a) A joint housing needs assessment
 - (b) A joint assessment of employment land requirements

- (c) A joint review of the Green Belt
 - (d) A joint report on a best-fit housing market area, and
 - (e) An agreed methodology over the assessment of land availability.
- 3.13 This joint work has identified that the areas to the south of Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire have a collective unmet need of 8,000 homes (2,200 to meet Wycombe's unmet need and 5,750 for Chiltern/South Bucks). This is then added the Vale's own locally generated need to create a housing requirement of 27,400 additional homes to the period 2033.
- 3.14 The Duty to Co-operate is an on going duty through the plan preparation and the four district councils in Buckinghamshire, together with the Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and this is attached at appendix 2.
- 3.15 At the present time we have not been asked to accommodate any unmet need from any other adjoining authorities and as Councils are at different stages of plan preparation, this needs to be kept under review.

Spatial Strategy

- 3.16 The overall spatial strategy proposed in the Submission Draft VALP to meet the housing and employment needs of the district is to direct sustainable levels of development to existing settlements, through the implementation of a capacity-based approach. This represents a move away from the percentage approach to apportioning development to settlements via their size as was proposed in the draft version of the VALP.
- 3.17 Table 1 on page 35 of the Submission Draft VALP sets out the proposed housing distribution across the settlement categories in the Vale. This table also details that over half of the additional 27,400 homes that we need to plan for have already been completed or have the benefit of planning permission. More than half of the new homes planned for the district are to go in and around Aylesbury.
- 3.18 Development is also proposed in the other key settlements of Buckingham, Winslow and Haddenham. Some homes are also expected to be delivered at RAF Halton once the site closes, currently scheduled to happen in 2022. The plan also recognises that in the longer term and beyond the plan period, a new settlement may be needed. This will be considered once we know more about the route of the proposed Oxford-Cambridge "Expressway".

Employment

- 3.19 The employment land forecast in the plan is for 26 hectares (for B1/B2 & B8), although there is currently an oversupply of employment space. However, in light of the shortfall in employment space in adjoining authorities, it is expected that Aylesbury Vale's surplus will play a crucial role in helping to meet this demand in due course.

Infrastructure

- 3.20 Ensuring that sufficient provision has been made for the infrastructure that needs to accommodate such levels of growth in housing and employment as proposed in VALP has been a key consideration in the preparation of the

plan. Officers have been working closely with Buckinghamshire County Council and other key agencies in formulating the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP). The IDP will be essential in determining the Community Infrastructure Levy, and this itself will be the subject of a separate public consultation and examination in due course.

Affordable Housing

- 3.21 The HEDNA identifies an affordable housing need of 4,130 during the plan period. The Submission Plan details the policies that relate to the provision of affordable housing and that a minimum of 25% affordable housing should be provided on sites with 11 or more units or 0.3ha or larger in size.
- 3.22 The Submission Plan also details how affordable housing on rural exception sites will be handled and also includes policies that deal with self/custom build housing, housing mix and dwelling sizes.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Provision

- 3.23 In line with Government guidance, the submission plan contains a policy in relation to the provision of suitable pitches for the gypsy and traveller community. The level of need for these sites been informed by a study jointly commissioned by the authorities in Buckinghamshire. It will also be something that needs to be kept under regular review.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.24 Members will recall that once a Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' or put into effect, it becomes part of the overarching development plan, which then forms the basis for planning decisions. Neighbourhood Plans have to take account of strategic elements of the relevant local plan. To avoid adding extra development beyond that which local communities consider necessary to meet its needs and where the level of development proposed in a neighbourhood plan enables the district to meet its strategic housing need, no further sites are being allocated. However in the strategic settlements, due to the overall housing need for the district, capacity identified and suitability of available sites, in some instances housing figures differ to those set out in neighbourhood plans.
- 3.25 Rather than impose sites on settlements with neighbourhood plans to meet these figures, the council has worked with town and parish councils to identify sites which can be allocated through revisions to their neighbourhood plans. The council will work to identify sites it can keep in reserve in such locations, so the supply which the local plan has to identify is set out in the Plan. These will only be activated if a neighbourhood plan revision has not passed pre-submission consultation within 12 months of the local plan being adopted, which is when neighbourhood plans gain enough weight to be considered in planning decisions.

Development Management Policies

- 3.26 The Submission Plan also contains a full suite of development management policies. These will continue to be kept up to date to ensure that they reflect and new government planning policy requirements prior to submission.

Policies Map

- 3.27 A key element of the local plan is the map which accompanies it, which is referred to as a policies map (also known as a proposals map). This identifies areas to be allocated for development and designations which need to be taken into account in applying policies. The local plan policies map does not replicate proposals and designations from the 'made' neighbourhood plans and their maps will need to be consulted separately.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.28 A sustainability appraisal needs to accompany the Submission Plan and this has been prepared and is one of the key pieces of evidence that will be scrutinised at examinations. This is one of the key background documents related to the plan and can be found on the council's website, alongside all of the other supporting evidence documents.

Engagement Strategy

- 3.29 At each stage of the plan preparation, members of this Council, Town and Parish Councils, other authorities and key partners have been actively engaged in the issues associated with the development of the plan. Regular briefing notes and seminars have been arranged to help keep everyone up to date with progress and the issues being considered. This engagement will continue as the plan progresses through to examination.

Next Stages

- 3.30 Once the Council has agreed the plan for consultation in October, the Submission Draft of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan will be published for a period of 6 weeks starting in November. Details on the procedures and the tests of soundness will be provided to help guide consultees.
- 3.31 The formal consultation process will be published in accordance with the Local Planning Regulations and using all relevant media sources.
- 3.32 Comments at the Regulation 19 stage need to focus on the soundness and legal compliance of the plan on the understanding that the council has approved the Local Plan as the version it intends to submit for examination. Any person may make representations on the plan and those that are made in accordance with the representation procedure will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate to consider making as part of the formal examination process.
- 3.33 At examination the Inspector will be judging whether the Plan is
- a) Positively prepared – ie based on a strategy which seems to meet objectively assessed need and infrastructure requirements
 - b) Justified – ie the plan should be an appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives
 - c) Effective – ie should be deliverable of the Plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic priorities

- d) Consistent with national policy - ie should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework
- 3.34 Once the publication period ends, we intend to submit the plan for examination by an independent Inspector. Comments received and any updated evidence will be passed to the Inspector, along with the comments from the 2016 consultation. It is our intention to submit the plan in January 2018.
- 3.35 We do not know when the examination is likely to be held but we hope this will be as early as possible in 2018. The Planning Inspectorate are aware of our timetable and will be keen to help move the plan forward in light of the level of development proposed and the history associated with plan preparation in the district.
- 3.36 The Government have recently announced that in September it plans to consult on a new methodology for calculating Objectively Assessed need. It is expected that this will ultimately lead to an increase in the levels of OAN in most areas. Government have confirmed that for those areas that have submitted their plan by March 2018, the new methodology will not need to be used, but will need to be at the review stage of the plan.

4 Resource implications

- 4.1 Funding of the Local Plan preparation is being met from existing budgets.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

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All background supporting documents for Submission Draft VALP
listed on AVDC website