

DRAFT VALP UNMET NEED AND MAJOR ISSUES

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the VALP Scrutiny Committee of the progress on the preparation of VALP, particularly in relation to unmet housing need, and undertake a discussion of the major issues raised in the recent draft VALP consultation.

2. Recommendation

1. That the VALP Scrutiny Committee receives the information on draft VALP progress and engages in discussions regarding major issues raised in consultation.

3. Unmet Housing Need

- 3.1 Following the AVDC response to the draft Wycombe Local Plan, which included a report by GL Hearn on potential new capacity, a workshop was undertaken involving representatives of the Bucks councils to evaluate the potential extra capacity. As a result of the information which was discussed at the workshop and contained in a response to the report from Wycombe District Council, GL Hearn have now concluded that the unmet need figure of 1700 dwellings “represents a reasonable basis to progress with in terms of the scale of unmet need at the current time”. A draft Memorandum of Understanding to formalise acceptance of the figure based on current evidence has been drawn up with the assistance of the Council’s barrister and supplied to Wycombe District Council for them to consider. A verbal update on any further progress will be given at the meeting.
- 3.2 In relation to the unmet need from Chiltern/S Bucks, currently estimated to be 5,800 dwellings, GL Hearn have been commissioned to prepare a report to consider the potential for further housing need to be met in the Chiltern/S Bucks area. A workshop has since taken place with Chiltern/S Bucks to inform GL Hearn’s work and a draft report has been prepared and supplied to Chiltern/S Bucks for their consideration. The report does not identify a specific figure for the potential further capacity but rather states that “It is unlikely that the current unmet need figure will remain at 5,800 dwellings”. The actual unmet need figure will be agreed with Chiltern/S Bucks through further cooperative working. The draft report has been supplied to Chiltern/S Bucks on a confidential basis for their initial response. A verbal update on progress will be given at the meeting.

4. Major issues arising from consultation

- 4.1 A summary of the representations has been prepared by outside consultants and has been published on the Council’s website together with spreadsheets which detail the content of the responses. The main issues raised were:
 - a) the overall level of housing – this has now reduced from 33,300 in the draft VALP to 26,800 because of a reduced forecast of housing need and reductions in unmet need. Unmet need may reduce further, but a total

absence of any unmet need falling on Aylesbury Vale is unlikely.

- b) meeting unmet housing need from other areas – unmet need has now reduced from the councils to the south and may reduce further, but a total absence of any unmet need falling on Aylesbury Vale is unlikely.
- c) the possible new settlement – none of the options were deemed acceptable by all and with the need to reduce supply significantly the option of removing a new settlement from the Local Plan is one that has to be considered. However, it is likely that a new plan will be needed soon after VALP is finalised and a new settlement option will have to be considered for the longer term. Also a further option has been suggested at Verney Junction.
- d) development on the edge of Milton Keynes – sites on the edge of Milton Keynes have to be considered as potential development options and could only be removed if suitable alternatives could be identified. Given their scale this would be difficult to achieve.
- e) provision of infrastructure such as schools and roads – detailed discussions are ongoing with all infrastructure stakeholders, particularly health organisations and the County Council to identify the necessary infrastructure for inclusion in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- f) removal of land from the Green Belt – with the reduction in housing need the exceptional circumstances justification has weakened for removing land at Wendover and alternative sites have been suggested. May however need to identify the land as a potential site for development in the longer term.
- g) distribution of development across the District – it was suggested that because of unmet need arising to the south development should be focussed in the south of the District, but the capacity of Aylesbury cannot be significantly increased. So pursuing such an option would probably require a new settlement at Haddenham
- h) level of development in the villages – the justification for the percentage approach was queried. Alternative approaches are now being considered based on the capacity of settlements to accommodate development.

4.2 The Committee is invited to express its views on the preferred strategy for meeting the forecast housing need taking into account the above information

4.3 Although not raised as a significant issue during the consultation the over supply of B1/B2/B8 employment land is a major issue as a significant reduction is necessary to avoid further housing being sought to support economic development. The revised HEDNA has raised the need to 26ha and Wycombe have indicated that they wish to transfer employment land need to us which has reduced the employment oversupply and further detailed work is underway to identify locations where other uses might be appropriate.

5. Local Plan progress

5.1 Central to the preparation of the new local plan are the housing need figures. These depend on the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) for Buckinghamshire. Since the production of the draft VALP the Buckinghamshire Councils commissioned an update to reflect the latest Government predictions. The

report has now been finalised and has been published. Implications for the housing and employment provision in VALP has been set out earlier in this report.

- 5.3 Work is continuing to finalise the range of other evidence that will need to be finalised before submission. The level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Water Cycle Study have been received in draft and are being discussed with stakeholders. Modelling and mitigation of traffic impacts from proposed development is nearing completion and consultation is underway on transport strategies for Aylesbury and Buckingham . The joint traveller needs assessment has been revised but the implications of the study still need to be clarified through further discussion. Further assessment of land availability is being carried out in relation to the larger and medium villages and a number of parishes have responded with site suggestions.
- 5.4 New retail evidence has been received in draft. Additional sites in the land availability assessment are being assessed and revisions to site suitability because of new information could lead to more sites being found suitable. New consultants have been appointed to carry out a full sustainability assessment alongside the revisions to the draft VALP strategy. A Habitat Regulations Assessment screening has been commissioned. An overall map and detailed inset maps are also being prepared to accompany the pre submission consultation version of the plan.
- 5.5 As soon as any further evidence is finalised it will be published on the councils website and the evidence will be used to inform the pre submission version of VALP. The evidence will all have to be in place to accompany the submission version of the plan during the pre submission consultation on the local plan and the council is confident that the evidence will be in place to allow consultation and submission in accord with the expected timetable.

6. Resource implications

- 6.1 Funding of Local Plan preparation is being derived from existing budgets.

Contact Officer	Peter Williams (01296) 585208
Background Documents	Draft VALP consultation document
	Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) revision
	Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)
	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)