

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER MEETING – JOBS, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT

22 October 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director - Environmental Services

**ASHFIELD LOCAL PLAN PUBLICATION DOCUMENT
CONSULTATION**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To agree the County Council's response to the consultation from Ashfield District Council (ADC) on its Local Plan Publication Document (LPPD).

(2) **Information and Analysis** ADC's consultation on its LPPD follows two previous rounds of consultation on its emerging Local Plan:

- Core Strategy Preferred Options (CSPO) in March 2010; and
- Local Plan Preferred Approach (LPPA) in October 2012.

Derbyshire County Council submitted Technical Officer comments to both consultations that related primarily to the potential cross-boundary issues for Derbyshire, particularly housing, employment, Green Belt and transport. These were considered to be limited to Amber Valley Borough and Bolsover District. The proposed strategy for growth in the LPPA was broadly supported. Whilst no fundamental concerns were raised about the potential impact on housing delivery, employment growth, Green Belt and highways, ADC was requested to address a number of detailed issues on housing, Green Belt and transport.

The proposed plan period for the LPPD is 2010 – 2024. The LPPD has a similar strategic approach to growth as set out in the LPPA, namely a predominantly economic development/employment growth driven strategy. Ashfield District has close cross-boundary functional links for housing and employment with adjoining Mansfield District to the north-east. Consequently, a number of joint housing and employment evidence base studies, covering both Districts, have been undertaken to inform the LPPD. As well as general policies on the environment, transport and infrastructure, the LPPD sets out more detailed strategies for

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growth in each of its three sub-zones, particularly relating to housing and employment land provision, green infrastructure and town centre development.

The proposed housing and employment land provision requirements for each sub-zone for the period 2010 – 2024 are:

Sub-zone	Housing (dwellings)	Employment land (ha)
Hucknall	2,469 (175 per annum (pa))	17
Kirkby/Sutton	4,438 (317 pa)	58
Selston/Jacksdale/Underwood	742 (53 pa)	No allocated land

Member Comments

Local Members x were consulted. Any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

Officer Comments

Overall, it is considered that the LPPD has no potential significant cross-boundary impacts on housing delivery, economic growth, Green Belt and highways for Derbyshire, particularly in Amber Valley Borough and Bolsover District.

There are no strong cross-boundary functional linkages for housing and employment growth between Ashfield, Amber Valley and Bolsover, given their differing Housing Market Areas (HMAs). Ashfield District is located in Nottingham Outer HMA, Amber Valley is in Derby HMA and Bolsover is in Northern HMA. As such, the proposed levels of housing provision and employment land proposed in the LPPD are unlikely to impact significantly on the housing provision and employment growth proposals currently being put forward in the emerging Core Strategies / Local Plans in Amber Valley and Bolsover. In addition, there are no large-scale housing allocations being proposed in the LPPD in close proximity to Amber Valley and Bolsover.

The proposed housing targets for the three sub-zones have been informed by an extensive evidence base, particularly a set of population and household projections jointly commissioned in 2011 for all city, borough and district council areas in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The majority of housing growth in Ashfield District is proposed in and around its main towns of Hucknall, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and areas adjacent to the Sub-Regional Centre of Mansfield, which have a range of existing shops, services and employment opportunities that would be able to support new growth. Smaller scales of housing growth are proposed in the larger rural settlements of Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood in keeping with their role and function. This broad housing growth strategy is consistent with those contained in the former East Midlands

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Regional Plan (EMRP) for the Three Cities and Northern Sub-Areas covering Ashfield District and would provide for a sustainable pattern of development.

It is supported that the LPPD proposes no major changes in the extent of the Green Belt or to its boundaries. Only minor changes to Green Belt boundaries are proposed where necessary to accommodate some of the proposed housing allocation sites. None of these amendments, however, would impact on the adjoining Green Belt in Amber Valley around Pye Bridge.

However, ADC is requested to address some more detailed outstanding issues, in respect of housing, Green Belt and transport in its LPPD.

Housing Comments

In view of the proposed plan period being 2010 – 2024, its end date would provide for only a 10 year time horizon if it was adopted in 2014. This is at odds with paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which advises local planning authorities (LPAs) to draw up their local plans over an appropriate timescale, 'preferably a 15 year time horizon', to take account of longer-term requirements. This is particularly important for Hucknall sub-zone because of its strong cross-boundary functional linkages for housing provision with Greater Nottingham (see below). The Core Strategies being prepared by the five LPAs in Greater Nottingham HMA, including Erewash Borough, all propose housing provision requirements for a longer time horizon up to 2028. As the Ashfield LPPD would have a significantly shorter time horizon, it would make the assessment of cross-boundary housing issues between the Greater Nottingham HMA and Ashfield more difficult over the longer-term.

Strategic Policy SP2: Overall Strategy for Growth, should set out the total level of housing growth provision for the District rather than the levels only being set out for each individual sub-zone. This would make Policy SP2 more explicit and transparent. It would assist adjoining LPAs in assessing the District's housing requirements in comparison with their own proposals for housing provision. It would also make plan monitoring more transparent for the public and developers alike, particularly in relation to the District's five year housing land supply requirements.

Green Belt Comments

Much of the central and southern parts of Ashfield District are in the Nottingham - Derby Green Belt. Its boundaries are tightly drawn around the urban area of Hucknall, the southern part of Kirkby and the smaller settlements of Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood. The Green Belt adjoins an area of Green Belt at Pye Bridge in Amber Valley.

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In 2006, officers of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils carried out a review of the Nottingham - Derby Green Belt to inform the strategy for growth in the Three Cities Sub-Area of the former EMRP. This concluded that the area of Green Belt in Ashfield was of high strategic importance in meeting the main Green Belt purposes, particularly in preventing the coalescence of the main urban area of Nottingham northwards with other settlements in Ashfield, especially Hucknall.

In light of the review, the LPPD's general approach to Green Belt is supported. It appropriately recognises, in the supporting text, the importance of the Green Belt as a major constraint, which has informed the proposed scale and location of housing and employment growth in the District. In particular, the levels of housing growth in the three sub-zones have been set at a level that is likely to have minimal impact on the Green Belt.

However, Policy SP2: Strategy for Growth, should be more explicit in setting out ADC's commitment to maintaining the principle of the Nottingham - Derby Green Belt and ensuring that the Green Belt is protected from inappropriate development. As currently written, Policy SP2 makes no specific reference to the strategic importance of the Green Belt. Bullet point 10 of the Policy states that 'Natural and historic environments, including both designated and non-designated assets and their settings should be protected, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced'. A similar bullet point referring to Green Belt should be included to address this important omission, such as "The principle of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt policy will be retained".

Policy EV1: Green Belt, is a development management policy that identifies uses that are appropriate or not in the Green Belt. In Point 1 of the Policy, it states that '*Permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt....except in exceptional circumstances*'. In its Officer response to the LPPA, the County Council highlighted the need for such a clear statement about development in the Green Belt. It is welcomed, therefore, that ADC has amended the policy to incorporate the statement. As set out above, however, Green Belt Policy could be strengthened further by setting out in Policy SP2 the District Council's commitment to maintaining the principle of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt.

Transport Comments

The proposed housing provision requirement set out in the rural sub-zone of Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood is for 742 dwellings. Two sites are identified (HG1Va, north of Alfreton Road, Selston and HG1Vg, Winter Close, Underwood), which propose 372 dwellings on 17ha of land. This proposed development could

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result in significant increases in traffic in the Ironville/Pye Bridge areas of Amber Valley.

However, Policy SD8: Traffic Management and Highway Safety, sets out the need for Transport Assessments to be submitted alongside applications for large scale development. Policy SD8 also establishes a requirement for measures to be provided as part of the development to ensure that the wider transport system is not compromised. These measures are welcomed. However, ADC is requested to ensure that it consults Derbyshire County Council on any Transportation Assessments that are submitted for development on either of the two proposed housing allocation sites at Selston and Underwood, and for any other site that potentially would generate significant volumes of cross-boundary traffic between Derbyshire and Ashfield District.

(3) **Financial Considerations** There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The recommendation in this report is made in the context of the County Council's responsibilities and services under the Localism Act 2011.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(4) **Key Decision** No.

(5) **Call-in** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in this report? No.

(6) **Background Papers** Held on file 1031.5 by the Planning Services Manager. Officer contact details – Steve Buffery, extension 39808.

(7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member authorises officers to respond to Ashfield District Council on its Local Plan Publication Document as set out in the report.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services