

ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

<u>REPORT TO :</u>	Planning Policy Committee
<u>DATE :</u>	22 May 2018
<u>REPORT TITLE :</u>	Local Plan – Draft Strategic Site Selection Evaluation Outcomes
<u>WARDS :</u>	All
<u>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</u>	Cllr Mary Maynard
<u>CONTACT OFFICER :</u>	Tracy Harvey - Head of Planning and Building Control

1.0 **Purpose Of Report**

- 1.1 To report the draft outcomes of the strategic site selections following the Call for Sites consultation.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Head of Planning and Building Control (HPBC) moves forward with the process outlined in this report, taking into account any comments made by the committee. This includes any comments made by email to the HPBC before Monday 28 May.
- 2.2 That draft finalised evaluation forms be reported to the Committee's June 2018 meeting.

3.0 **Background Information**

- 3.1 As agreed at Planning Policy Committee (PPC) and Cabinet in November 2017, alongside the Local Plan (LP) Regulation 18 consultation ran a 'Call for Sites'. This was seeking submissions from landowners/developers/promoters for potential development land. The 'Call for Sites' ran from 9 January 2018 to 21 February 2018. As agreed at PPC and Cabinet, this Call for Sites was focussed primarily on sites for residential development, but was also open to sites for other uses. This included sites for Employment, Health, Schools, Gypsy and Traveller and 'Other' uses.
- 3.2 At its April 2018 meeting the Committee received a report on the analysis of the responses to the consultations. This included both the LP Regulation 18 consultation and the associated Call for Sites. This report included a schedule of sites submitted to the Call for Sites as well as a map of these submitted sites.
- 3.3 The January 2018 report considered by the committee set out:

Call for sites

...

The next step in the consideration of sites put forward will be a review of options for meeting development requirements, including:

making effective use of suitable brownfield sites and the opportunities offered by estate regeneration;

the potential offered by land which is currently underused, including surplus public sector land where appropriate;

optimising the proposed density of development;

and exploring whether other authorities can help to meet some of the identified development requirement.

It is likely that to meet development requirements consideration will need to be given to releasing land from the Green Belt. As set out in previous Planning Policy Committee reports, by definition, as not being part of the identified 8 locations identified as causing 'least damage' to Green Belt purposes, any other locations would cause a higher degree of damage to Green Belt purposes.

The Council, once the details of the new sites have been received, will need to consider if there are any unique opportunities that might be provided in association with any sites put forward that might override the additional level of damage to Green Belt purposes. Including (for these and the 8 sites identified in the Green Belt Review) how the impact is to be offset by compensatory improvements to the environmental quality or accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. This could, for example, include community forests, nature reserves or allotments. As set out in previous Planning Policy Committee reports, other factors to consider might be:

1 - Unique contribution to improve public services and facilities, eg public transport

2 - Unique contribution to enhancing local high quality job opportunities and the aspirations of the Hertfordshire Local Economic Partnership / Hertfordshire EnviroTech Enterprise Zone

3 - Unique contribution to other infrastructure provision or community benefits

The Housing White Paper is suggesting that local planning authorities should look first at using any Green Belt land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs.

- 3.4 The March 2018 PPC Report entitled “Local Plan - Development Strategy and Draft Strategic Site Selection Process” developed this outline process further. This report presents evaluations of all potential strategic scale sites.
- 3.5 It was previously agreed at PPC’s March meeting that strategic scale sites are those that are “capable of accommodating residential development of a minimum of circa 500 dwellings or 14 hectares of developable land”. The evaluations cover responses to the 2018 ‘Call for Sites 2018’ and previous Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) submissions.
- 3.6 As agreed at March’s PPC meeting, each site has been evaluated using a Red Amber Green (RAG) system. Each site has been assessed against three stages and eight criteria as follows:

Stage 1

1. *Green Belt Review (GBR) evaluation*

Stage 2

2. *Suitability*
3. *Availability*

Stage 3

4. *Unique contribution to improve public services and facilities*
5. *Unique contribution to enhancing local high quality job opportunities*
6. *Unique contribution to other infrastructure provision or community*
7. *Deliverable / Achievable*
8. *Overall Evaluation*

- 3.7 As agreed at March’s PPC meeting, any Red rating given at Stage 1 or Stage 2 rules the site out for further consideration.

4.0 Analysis and Findings

- 4.1 A schedule of the potential strategic sites are presented at Appendix 1 to this report. Appendix 1 is split into two tables. Table 1 is a list of sites that meet the strategic scale site thresholds set out in paragraph 3.5 above. All sites have a unique reference number and are listed in order of this reference number.
- 4.2 Table 1 summarises each strategic scale site, including its site area and indicative capacity at 40dph on 60% of the site. The indicative capacity is worked out on 60% of the site as the remaining 40% is expected to be used for site infrastructure, such as roads, schools and recreational space. Sixty percent is therefore considered to provide a more accurate indicative capacity than if the whole site were to be considered. Indicative dwelling numbers have been rounded up to the nearest whole dwelling. The RAG rating for each criteria, as detailed in paragraph 3.5 above, is also included.

- 4.3 Where a site has been given an overall rating of Green or Amber, a further more detailed SADC capacity estimate has been included. This is due to further work having been carried out on these sites by looking at the land area available and infrastructure requirements and opportunities. As a result of this, a more detailed estimate has been able to be provided.
- 4.4 The thresholds agreed by PPC at its March 2018 meeting were “sites capable of accommodating residential development of a minimum of circa 500 dwellings or 14 hectares of developable land”. A number of sites have been submitted which are not small, but also do not meet the scale or capacity thresholds agreed. Although these sites can be noted for general awareness, they fall sufficiently below the overall scale and dwelling capacity to not be taken forward to Stage 1 assessment. Such sites, between 10.5h and 14h dwellings or of a capacity of 375-500 dwellings, are therefore included as Table 2 of Appendix 1. Other sites included in Table 2 include those which have been superseded by new site submissions with similar site boundaries, and those which have been constructed since the submission.
- 4.5 Consideration has also been given to combined sites. These are made up of two or more sites where they can be combined with adjoining sites to meet the threshold and could potentially allow for a comprehensive form of development. In these cases the combined sites have been allocated a unique reference number and assessed as a larger parcel. Where two or more strategic sites are adjoining and could be combined to form a single site, these have not been separately assessed, as the individual sites will have been assessed and the evaluation forms can be read in conjunction. Where sites have been combined to form one, larger site, the reference numbers of its constituent sites are included in brackets in the site details columns of both tables.
- 4.6 There is a map of the Table 1 (Appendix 1) strategic scale sites at Appendix 2a. The combined sites referred to in paragraph 4.4 above and within Table 2 of Appendix 1, are included as Appendix 2b. The evaluation forms are at Appendix 3. The methodology for the assessments are as agreed in the March 2018 PPC meeting.
- 4.7 The independent Green Belt Review (GBR) identifies strategic land parcels, and assessed each parcel against its level of contribution to the 5 Green Belt purposes. The level of contribution could be ‘Significant’, ‘Partial’ or ‘Limited/No’. For Stage 1, any ‘Significant’ or ‘Partial’ assessments against any of the 5 purposes have been quoted in italics in the evaluation forms.
- 4.8 An issue of presentation was encountered by officers when applying the methodology for steps 4,5 and 6 as originally outlined in the March 2018 PPC Report. The methodological approach and written content for each assessment is as originally agreed by the Committee. However, in applying a RAG rating system to this analysis, it was considered potentially clearer to leave the ratings as Green (as no sites were being be ‘ruled out’ through these steps). The commentary provides the analysis and the use of the RAG ratings can be considered further as the draft is finalised.

- 4.9 The committee is reminded that the GBR provided indicative boundaries for the strategic sites. The GBR explicitly set out that these indicative boundaries would need to be looked at further in determining what should be finalised boundaries for a Local Plan. These current assessments are based on evolving considerations, including opportunities to deliver additional housing. It is expected that the Local Plan/masterplanning process will review the indicative boundaries and bring forward final boundaries.
- 4.10 Some of the strategic scale sites will have been given an evaluation against Stage 1 of Red, were 'shortlisted' as part of the 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). It should be noted that the SHLAA was only a very high level document and sites 'shortlisted' in it were not assessed in the context of a strategic GBR. The GBR is at the core of this Strategic Sites Selection methodology which effectively supersedes the 2009 SHLAA.
- 4.11 The evaluation forms conclude that 8 sites have an overall evaluation of Green. These are the same 8 sites that were concluded in the GBR as making the least contribution towards Green Belt purposes. These sites are East Hemel Hempstead (North), East Hemel Hempstead (South), Land at Chiswell Green, North East Harpenden, North West Harpenden, North St Albans and East St Albans.
- 4.12 The evaluation forms concludes that 4 sites have an overall evaluation of Amber. These sites are South East Hemel Hempstead, North Hemel Hempstead, the Former Radlett Aerodrome and North East Redbourn.

Next Steps

- 4.13 As agreed at the March meeting of PPC, developers of the sites scoring an overall evaluation of Green or Amber will be invited to present their schemes. These presentations will be considered by an Evaluation Validation panel. This will comprise the Chair of PPC and up to 3 Councillors selected from PPC. This is due to take place on 23 May and 24 May 2018.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This report gives the Committee an opportunity to comment on the draft evaluation forms.
- 5.2 This initial draft shows 8 Green sites and 4 Amber sites passing step 8 of the evaluation. Developers of these sites will be invited to present their schemes on 23 and 24 May 2018.

6.0 Implications

- 6.1 This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and / or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of	Yes/No	Impact/Reference
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the following?		
Vision and Priorities	Yes	Whole report relates to planning for the future. However there are no direct implications from this report because decisions are not required at this point.
Policy	Yes	As for Visions and Priorities above
Financial	No	As for Visions and Priorities above
Impact on the community	Yes	As for Visions and Priorities above
Legal and Property	No	As for Visions and Priorities above
HR/Workforce	No	As for Visions and Priorities above
Risk Assessment	No	As for Visions and Priorities above
Environmental Sustainability	Yes	As for Visions and Priorities above
Health and Wellbeing	Yes	As for Visions and Priorities above

7.0 **Further Information/Appendices**

7.1 Appendix 1 Schedule of strategic sites

7.2 Appendix 2a Strategic sites map

7.3 Appendix 2b Combined sites map

7.4 Appendix 3 Site assessment forms

8.0 **Background Papers - Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**