

ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

<u>REPORT TO :</u>	Planning Policy Committee
<u>DATE :</u>	17 May 2016
<u>REPORT TITLE :</u>	SLP Evidence Update – Development Sites and Strategy Options Evaluation (DSSOE)
<u>WARDS :</u>	All
<u>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</u>	Cllr Julian Daly
<u>CONTACT OFFICER :</u>	Tracy Harvey Head of Planning and Building Control

1. Purpose Of Report

- 1.1 To consider whether any new evidence has arisen in respect of the site options aspect of the evaluation and to finalise the draft Technical Report (TR) on this topic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the changes suggested (at Para. 4.6 of this Report) and that an appropriate decision be taken on revision and finalisation of the TR.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The SLP TR “Development Site and Strategy Evaluation” (October 2014 Draft) (DSSOE) is an important element of the Council’s decision making process on the SLP. A link to this document is provided in the Background Documents section of the report. The detailed evaluations are summarised in the scoring matrices (Sites - page 189) and (Strategy - page 227).
- 3.2 The Committee carefully evaluated the options for the Broad Locations for development to be included in the SLP (taken from the Independent Green Belt Review), and also for the overall Development Strategy. The evaluation was undertaken systematically and in considerable depth. The Committee considered officer analysis and recommendations over a series of meetings. Public questions from the residents and landowner / developer interests were taken into account. The formal Regulation 18 consultation process on the Consultation Draft SLP provided a further opportunity for scrutiny.

- 3.3 Following consideration of the results of the Regulation 18 consultation the Committee further examined the site options through a process of detailed engagement with the landowners and developers promoting the various sites. The results were reported to the Committee in November 2015. The focus of this stage of evaluation was on testing realistic delivery prospects and attributes of the sites, by taking direct account of landowner / developer view points and intentions.
- 3.4 The Council's decisions on the SLP to date have endorsed the evaluation outcomes. They confirm the development strategy choice and the selection of the sites which make up the strategy (these became the SLP Broad Locations).
- 3.5 Full details of all the Committee's past work on this issue are available through the links to PPC reports included in the Background Documents Section of the report.
- 3.6 At the time of the Regulation 18 consultation lead members noted that there was continued questioning by interested parties of some aspects of the detailed scoring in the evaluation of sites. Members indicated that, following the Regulation 19 Publication Draft SLP consultation, it would be useful to do a final check (and potential adjustment), of the detailed scoring of the site aspects only. This check was not envisaged as questioning or altering the relative ranking of the sites. For this reason the DSSOE TR was left as a draft for finalisation at this stage. The Minute of the 17 November PPC meeting sets out clearly that:

It was noted that the Development Site and Strategy Options Evaluation would need to be updated prior to submission of the SLP to the Secretary of State, and that changes to some of the site scorings may result, although such changes will likely be minimal.

- 3.7 This report facilitates final consideration of the detailed site evaluation scores before a decision is taken to submit the SLP to the Secretary of State for examination (programmed for the June Committee leading to Cabinet decision). All evidence will need to be finalised at the point of submission.

4. **Analysis and Findings**

- 4.1 Officers have now re-examined the site evaluation matrix taking account of:
- The outcome the engagement with land owners and developers in during Autumn 2015;
 - The results of the Regulation 19 consultation. This is currently being analysed in detail for the submission related reports programmed for the Committee's June meeting;

- On-going work on site related infrastructure issues with the various specialist bodies involved and the landowners / developers. Of particular relevance to this report is further work on traffic issues. This work will eventually be recorded as part of the SLP Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which due for report and inclusion in SLP evidence at the Committee's June meeting.

4.2 From these sources, there are two main issues have been identified as having the potential to trigger reconsideration of scores:

- Criticism of the scoring from residents and landowners / developers that relates to judgements on the infrastructure issues involved in bringing sites forward. In particular the judgements are about traffic conditions and perceived highway access problems and solutions. Previously the Committee has paused for thought on the North St Albans site – S4 (the landowner / developer felt that the traffic / access problems had been over estimated) and the NW Harpenden site - S5 (the adverse traffic consequences and access difficulties of the site were seen by local residents and the Town Council as possibly under estimated).
- Feedback arising from the landowner / developer engagement exercise has placed greater emphasis on the practical delivery potential and community benefits arising from development of some of the sites. In particular this could be seen as arising in respect of the Committee's thinking after hearing about Crown Estate proposals for east Hemel Hempstead site - S 1 / 2 and Oaklands College proposals for the east St Albans site - S3).

4.3 The Committee should be cautious in making adjustments to the scoring of any individual site. This is mainly because the scores are intended to assist in, and make transparent, judgements about relativities between sites. Consistency is important to the overall integrity of the scoring. Also, the evaluation is based on fundamental attributes of the sites in terms of environmental, social and economic development potential.

4.4 Offers from landowners / developers to develop in a way that mitigates or addresses problems are relevant, but must be balanced with the severity of the problem addressed. Delivery benefits specific to individual landowner proposals should not alter the fundamentals of the evaluation greatly as the potential for that benefit is already covered in the scoring. It may however be that the emphasis can be changed in a way that confirms the basic judgements.

4.5 Generally, officers advise that the overall scoring and relativities remain appropriate.

- 4.6 Nevertheless, to reflect the points noted through the process some minor adjustments are suggested. These relate to vehicular access and traffic impact, rather than practical delivery benefits. On delivery of community benefits, there is little scope for increasing the scores for the sites in question. They already have high scores based on their inherent potential.
- 4.7 The possible changes in scores are indicated in red on the draft scoring matrix set out below:

Development Sites Evaluation Results Overall Scoring Matrix

(as scored to date – *possible adjustments indicated in italic text*)

THEME	ECONOMIC							SOCIAL							ENVIRONMENTAL										
Strategic Sub Areas	1 - Sustainable Location	Weighting (10)	2 - Settlement hierarchy	Weighting (10)	3 - Mixed-use development	Weighting (5)	4 - Other Matters	Weighting (5)	5 - Strategic infrastructure provision	Weighting (10)	6 - Vehicular access and traffic impact	Weighting (10)	7 - Public transport	Weighting (5)	8 - Urban Design	Weighting (5)	9 - Environmental constraints	Weighting (10)	10 - Landscape quality / surrounding area	Weighting (10)	11 - Heritage / archaeology potential	Weighting (5)	12 - Opportunities for sustainable energy production	Weighting (5)	Total/ Rank (potential maximum score 90)
SA-S1 – Land enclosed by east Hemel Hempstead and M1 (North)	7		10		5		4		10		5		5		3		6		4		4		5		68 (Rank 2)
SA-S2 – Land enclosed by east Hemel Hempstead and M1 (South)	8		10		5		4		10		5		5		3		6		5		4		5		70 (Rank 1)
SA-S3 – Area enclosed by residential development at east St Albans along Sandpit Lane	7		10		2		4		5		7 -1 (6)		4		4		7		7		5		2		64 (63) (Rank 3)

SA-S4 – Enclosed land at north St Albans along Sandridgebury Lane	7		10		0		3		0		2 +1 (3)		4		3		7		6		5		0		47 (48) (Rank 5)
SA-S5 – Enclosed land at north Harpenden in vicinity of Luton Road, Cooters End Lane and Ambrose Lane	8		9		0		3		0		9 -1 (8)		4		4		7		7		4		0		55 (54) (Rank 4)
SA-S6 – Enclosed land at northeast Harpenden along Lower Luton Road and extending to the vicinity of Whittings Close	7		8		0		3		0		5		3		2		7		5		5		0		45 (Rank 6)
SA-S7 – Land south and south west of London Colney	5		6		0		3		1		7		1		2		5		5		4		0		39 (Rank 8)
SA-S8 – Enclosed land at Chiswell Green Lane at Chiswell Green	4		4		0		3		0		6		2		4		8		8		5		0		44 (Rank 7)

5. **Conclusion**

Overall the Committee's conclusions on the relative merits of the sites (Broad Locations) that form the basis of the Publication Draft SLP, remain valid. Minor adjustments are suggested to be made to the scoring on the vehicular access and traffic factor.

6. **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 paragraphs in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?	Yes/No	Impact/Reference
Vision and Priorities	Yes	The whole report relates to planning for the future and the content of the SLP / DLP includes relevant issues
Policy	Yes	As for Vision and Priorities above
Financial	No	There are no financial implications arising from this report
Impact on the community	Yes	As for Vision and Priorities above
Legal and Property	No	There are no legal and property implications arising from this report
HR/Workforce	No	There are no corporate HR/Workforce implications arising from this report
Risk Assessment	No	There are currently no risks associated with this report other than timetabling of key decisions on Council priority projects
Environmental Sustainability	Yes	As for Vision and Priorities above
Health and Wellbeing	Yes	As for Vision and Priorities above

7. **Further Information/Appendices**

- 7.1 None

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

<u>Bibliography</u>	<u>Custodian</u>	<u>File Location</u>

Past Planning Policy Committee Reports / Minutes	John Hoad x 2569	<u>St Albans City & District Council - Browse meetings - Planning Policy Committee</u>
SLP Technical Report Development Site and Strategy Options Evaluation October 2014 Draft	John Hoad x 2569	<u>http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/SP_Development_Site_Strategy_OptionsEvaluationDraftTechnicalReport_tcm15-45213.pdf</u>