

COUNCIL – 3 July 2014

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

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The Leader made a brief statement at the start of this item, in order to reiterate the Council's commitment to protecting the Green Belt and to only allow its land to be released for development as a last resort if the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year land supply from other sources.

To this end, he proposed that a further resolution should be added to the recommendation, making the Council's position on this point clear.

The Leader then invited Councillor Schofield to introduce the report.

Councillor Schofield began by expressing his recognition and thanks, to both officers and his predecessor on the Executive, Councillor Miller, for the extensive work and effort that had gone into the preparation of the Core Strategy and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Core Strategy was an important document as it provided the overall framework for development in the Borough.

Following a lengthy examination process, it had been declared legally compliant and 'sound' by the Planning Inspector subject to some amendment. The modifications recommended were considered by the Executive in summer 2013, and publicly consulted on, and were considered to be acceptable.

A report was subsequently presented to the Executive in March 2014, but it was then deferred to allow further consideration of correspondence from central government and the Planning Inspectorate. Further legal guidance was also sought which confirmed that the options were to either adopt the Core Strategy or to withdraw it.

The benefits of having an adopted Core Strategy were clear, in that the Council would be able to move forward with updating its Development Management policies and introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy. Having to start again would mean significant challenges and resource implications.

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document would be an important tool in implementing the Core Strategy as it provided detailed guidance on the Council's affordable housing policy, which now included contributions from smaller development sites.

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The SPD had been consulted on and, if adopted, would be brought into force at the same time as the Core Strategy.

The report also recommended updates to the LDF timetable, with changes proposed to the timetables for the Development Management Policies plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy as a result of the Core Strategy adoption date being later than had previously been envisaged.

Councillor Schofield concluded his presentation by commending all the recommendations in the report, together with the further recommendation tabled by the Leader.

During the ensuing debate the importance of protecting Green Belt land was highlighted by all speakers. It was equally recognised, however, that having an adopted Core Strategy would strengthen the Council's position in managing future development in the Borough and in negotiating the supply of affordable housing.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the outcomes of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation are noted (Annex 5) and the SPD as amended (Annex 6) is adopted with effect from the date of Core Strategy adoption;
- (ii) the Policy and Regeneration Manager is authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development, to make any necessary additional modifications to the Affordable Housing SPD, to ensure factual accuracy and clarity prior to adoption/publication;
- (iii) The revised LDF timetable (Annex 7) is approved for publication on the Council website and the LDS is updated accordingly; and
- (iv) it is noted that the Council is committed to the continued protection of the Green Belt. It fully supports the 'urban areas first' approach set out in the Core Strategy. Green Belt sites will only be released for development if the council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing sites from other sources.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) **The Inspector's Report (Annex 1), along with recent ministerial correspondence, national planning**

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guidance and legal advice (Annex 4), is noted and the Core Strategy (Annex 2) be adopted, subject to the modifications recommended by the Inspector and additional minor modifications (Annex 3), with immediate effect; and

- (ii) The Policy and Regeneration Manager be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Development, to make any necessary additional modifications to the Core Strategy to ensure factual accuracy and clarity prior to adoption/publication.**

Reasons for decision:

Resolution (i): The draft Affordable Housing SPD has been consulted on and updated in the light of that consultation. Adoption at the same time as the Core Strategy will mean that detailed guidance is available to officers, developers and registered providers of affordable housing to help implement the Core Strategy policy.

Resolution (ii) and Recommendation (ii): This will allow for minor factual, typographical and formatting amendments to be made as necessary prior to publication of the two documents.

Resolution (iii): This will ensure that up-to-date information about plan making in Reigate & Banstead is made available, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Resolution (iv): To emphasise the Council's commitment to the protection of Green Belt land.

Recommendation (i): The Core Strategy has been found sound and legally compliant by a Planning Inspector, subject to a number of modifications. Adoption will ensure that the Council has an up-to-date Development Plan. This will provide certainty for local people, developers and service providers about future growth in the borough, reduce the risk of inappropriate development being allowed at appeal and enable the Council to progress work to update its development management policies and introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Reasons for urgency and disapplication of call in:

To enable the Council to:

- (i) secure, at the earliest opportunity, certainty about the Council's strategy for the scale and location of growth in the

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borough, and to provide a robust framework for decision making on planning applications which may be contrary to this strategy;

(ii) progress work on the Community Infrastructure Levy as soon as possible, to secure infrastructure contributions to deliver important local infrastructure, and

(iii) enable the implementation of the Core Strategy Affordable Housing policy (and Affordable Housing SPD) as soon as possible, to allow the Council to maximise the level of contributions it can to support much needed affordable housing in the Borough.

Alternative option:

Not to recommend adoption of the Core Strategy.

Not to recommend adoption of the Affordable Housing SPD.