



## Chichester Local Plan Examination statement

### Matter 3: Development and Settlement Hierarchy - Policy 2

September 2014

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This statement has been produced as part of the examination of the Chichester Local Plan. It answers the Inspector's questions relating to matter 3.

Any queries about the report should be sent to the programme officer:

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## **1. Is the settlement hierarchy based on robust and up to date evidence?**

- 1.1. Yes, as explained in the Local Plan, the settlement hierarchy is based on the existing characteristics of settlements and their intended role through the Plan period, reflecting the Local Plan Vision. As stated in the Plan, the classification of settlements within the hierarchy takes account of a range of different factors, including the availability of services and facilities, levels of accessibility and public transport, settlement size and character, identified infrastructure and environmental constraints and potential land availability. Detailed assessments of all the settlements in the Plan area are provided in the Settlement Capacity Profiles (SCP) (CD-75).
- 1.2. The methodology section of the SCP lists the source(s) of information used. In all cases, the dataset or information used represents the most recent available data source. Key datasets include the 2011 Population Census, the annual development monitoring survey (updated to 1 April 2013), the Chichester DC Community Facilities database (which is updated on an ongoing basis), and the most recently published rail and bus timetables. The information on development constraints and infrastructure is drawn from background studies undertaken to support the Local Plan and comments from relevant statutory agencies and infrastructure providers.
- 1.3. Since the publication of the Settlement Capacity Profiles in October 2013, some of the information relating to settlements may have changed to a limited degree (e.g. revisions to public transport services). In addition, the Council has published an updated 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (CD-16) which presents amended information about potential site availability. However, there is no new evidence that is considered significant enough to justify revisiting the settlement hierarchy as set out in the Plan.

## **2. Are the settlement boundaries justified by evidence?**

- 2.1. Yes, the use of settlement boundaries is justified by evidence.
- 2.2. In order to plan in a sustainable manner in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (CD-62), those settlements which are considered to have sufficient facilities for additional residential development to be sustainable are defined with settlement boundaries in the Local Plan: Key Policies Pre-Submission (CD-01). The Settlement Capacity Profiles (CD-75) assesses the key characteristics of the different settlements in the Plan area and the potential of settlements to accommodate future growth and housing

development. Analysis in the report fed directly into the categorisation of settlements as settlement hubs, service villages etc. as outlined on paragraph 5.1 of the Local Plan: Key Policies Pre-Submission.

- 2.3. The settlement boundaries contained in the Local Plan are based on those in the 1999 Local Plan. There has not been a review of the boundaries in the Local Plan: Key Policies Pre-Submission.
- 2.4. It is intended that settlement boundaries will be amended primarily through the neighbourhood planning process. Boundaries may be amended to reflect a site allocation or to allow for growth over the plan period. If a neighbourhood plan decides to allocate land for housing, part of the process is to consider options and alternatives. Any decision should be supported by a robust evidence base which clearly identifies how the decisions have been made, the issues which have been considered and evidence that the sites are likely to be developed over the plan period. Paragraph 42 of the Planning Practice Guidance (CD-72) refers to neighbourhood plans allocating sites for development.
- 2.5. In order to help parishes carry out a settlement boundary review a guide has been produced which outlines the aim of settlement boundaries and outlines the need for a clear methodology to be used in their review, and how to undertake an assessment. The guide on how to approach amending the settlement boundary has been circulated to parishes and is on the neighbourhood planning webpage<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.6. Where a parish council does not wish to prepare their own neighbourhood plan, or work on a neighbourhood plan has stalled, the Council will work with the parishes to identify sites in a Site Allocation Development Plan Document. The timetable for which is outlined in the Local Development Scheme 2014-2017 (CD-94).
- 2.7. The exceptions to this approach relate to the Strategic Development Sites, the settlement boundaries for Chichester and Westhampnett will be amended to reflect the strategic sites, if the sites are found suitable through the examination. The policies map will be amended at the same time as the Site Allocation Document is progressed. At Tangmere the boundary will be amended in the neighbourhood plan. This approach deals with the current uncertainty as to the precise extent of where built development will take place, which will partly be resolved through the Local Plan examination process, but also through the neighbourhood plan at Tangmere, and the detailed masterplanning at West of Chichester and Westhampnett/NE Chichester.

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<sup>1</sup> [Guide to Settlement Boundaries](#)

- 3. Do the criteria for development in the service villages allow sufficient flexibility?**
  - 3.1. Yes, Policy 2 makes a cross-reference to the indicative housing numbers set out in Policy 5. It therefore allows sufficient flexibility for the parishes to increase the number of homes through their Neighbourhood Plans if they feel this will help to make their settlements more self-sufficient.
  - 3.2. Policy 2 positively identifies the type and scale of development that would be acceptable in the service villages. It allows for the provision of local community facilities and small-scale employment, tourism or leisure proposals without being prescriptive. The policy simply allows for these types of development where they help make a settlement more self-sufficient. The Parishes will be able to determine exactly what they think their community needs in order to make this possible.
  - 3.3. The reference to making a settlement more self-sufficient in Policy 2 is intended to be interpreted flexibly and is not a test that applicants would need to demonstrate compliance with.
- 4. Should this policy, Policy 5 or Policy 6, carry forward the approach to development outside of settlement policy areas where the boundary is contiguous with the settlement policy area (as set out in the interim policy statement “Facilitating Appropriate Development”)**
  - 4.1. No, the Council does not consider that such an approach is necessary. The Interim Policy Statement on Housing – Facilitating Appropriate Development (CD-95) was adopted by the Council as a temporary measure, in response to the five year housing shortfall in the period prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan. It was intended to guide and as far as possible manage the ad hoc proposals for housing development resulting from the absence of up-to-date plan policies. However, following the submission of the Local Plan on 30 May 2014, it is considered that the policies in the draft Local Plan now carry greater planning weight and provide sufficient development management guidance. Therefore the Council has now formally withdrawn the Interim Policy Statement.
  - 4.2. Policy 2 seeks to provide for a plan-led approach to development, where those sites most appropriate for housing or other development are identified through neighbourhood plans or through a Site Allocations DPD (where parish councils do not wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan). This will

ensure that potential development sites are considered as part of a structured and comprehensive assessment process, involving the direct involvement of local communities in planning the development and growth of their local area. Settlement boundaries will be redrawn to include proposed development sites as part of the plan-making process. Outside settlement boundaries, development will be resisted unless it requires a countryside location, meet an essential local rural need or supports rural diversification. Once redrawn, the settlement boundaries will therefore provide clarity as to where future development will be located.

- 4.3. The Council considers that including policy wording allowing for sites contiguous with settlement boundaries to come forward - similar to that in the Interim Policy Statement on Housing – Facilitating Appropriate Development (CD-95) - would undermine this plan-led approach, by encouraging housing proposals to come forward on an ad hoc basis ahead of neighbourhood plans. In the Council's view, this would be likely to undermine the intended role of neighbourhood plans in identifying housing sites and determining the future pattern of development at the local level. As a result, it would reduce local community support for the Local Plan and neighbourhood planning.
- 4.4. Several Local Plan representations have argued that, due to the time delay before neighbourhood plans and/or a Site Allocations DPD are in place, it is necessary to carry forward the 'FAD' approach to ensure sufficient housing land supply in the early part of the Plan period. However, at the time of adoption of the Local Plan, the Council expects to be able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. The evidence to support this is set out in the Council's response to Matter 5/10 and in the updated Local Plan housing trajectory and Housing Implementation Strategy (HIS) (CD-48). The updated HIS further demonstrates that the Local Plan will deliver a continuing supply of housing. Work is now well underway to prepare neighbourhood plans in the vast majority of parishes where housing is proposed in the Local Plan and this is expected to deliver sufficient housing sites in the period up to 2019 to meet the Local Plan housing target of 410 homes per year as set out in the housing trajectory. Similarly, work is already well underway towards bringing forward the strategic development locations and this is expected to enable development to come forward on these sites from 2019 onwards, immediately following completion of the proposed expansion of the Tangmere wastewater treatment works.
- 4.5. Therefore, the Council does not consider that the inclusion of policy wording enabling sites contiguous to settlement boundaries to come forward is necessary or in line with the intended approach set out in Policy 2.

**5. Does the policy address the specific character and nature of the north of the Plan area?**

- 5.1. No, the Council addresses its specific character and nature of the north of the Plan area in paragraphs 14.2 and 14.3 and in the first bullet point of Policy 25 Development in the North of the Plan area. Policy 2 does, however, identify Camelsdale/Hammer, Kirdford, Loxwood, Plaistow/Ifold and Wisborough Green as service villages. The text before Policy 25 recognises the unique quality of the North of the Plan area and its links with the South Downs National Park and also other larger settlements that provide higher order facilities outside of the Chichester District Boundary.
- 5.2. The Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 Pre-submission (CD-01) limits the amount of growth proposed in the North of the Plan area and the reasons are explained at paragraph 2.7 of A Balanced Approach to Housing Provision (CD-09).
- 5.3. The character and nature of these settlements is also recognised in the Settlement Capacity Profiles (CD-75).
- 5.4. For clarity the proposed additional modification **M90** amends the first sentence of paragraph 14.2<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications to the Pre-submission Local Plan](#): Page 10