

# Appendix 03: Pre 2024 Chronology with Three Rivers District Council



## **04\_11\_2015 Duty to Co-operate Meeting between Hertsmere Borough Council, Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council.**

**Date:** 4 November 2015

**Venue:** Civic Centre, Hertsmere Council Offices, Borehamwood

### **Attendees:**

- **Hertsmere Borough Council:** Tai Tsui (TS), Richard Blackburn (RB), Ann Darnell (AD)
- **Watford Borough Council:** (Names not listed in detail, but represented)
- **Three Rivers District Council:** (Names not listed in detail, but represented)

### *Purpose of Meeting*

- Share progress on plan-making.
- Discuss common concerns and strategic planning issues under the Duty to Cooperate (Localism Act 2011).
- Progress evidence-based work for local plan reviews.

### *Agenda Items*

1. **Welcome**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings** (13 Nov & 5 Dec 2014)
3. **Matters Arising**
4. **Local Plan Documents – Progress**
5. **Local Plan Studies** (including SHMA and Economy Study)
6. **Green Belt Assessment**
7. **External Studies** – progress and issues, particularly St Albans
8. **Projects Update**
  - **Watford:** Croxley Rail Link, Watford Junction, Health Campus, town centre
  - **Three Rivers:** South Oxhey, Tolpits Lane Employment Area
  - **Hertsmere:** Paddock Road/Cemetery provision
9. **Any Other Business**

**13\_11\_2014 and 05\_12\_2014 Duty to Co-operate Meeting held in 2 parts.**

**Duty to Cooperate Meeting – Three Rivers, Hertsmere, and Watford Councils**

**Any relevant matters re our Local Plan Studies**

- **TRDC Site Allocations** – additional hearing day in July re modifications: adopted 25 November 2014.
- **WBC Site Allocations merged with Development Management Policies** – publish 15 December 2014
- **HBC Site Allocations and Development Management Policies** – to be published in Spring 2015

**External studies – progress and issues, in particular St Albans SHMA**

- WBC and TRDC could merge their Local Plan Working Parties
- Chiltern Local Plan suspended – DPD strategy did not deliver their Core Strategy target
- CM said that Harrow and Hillingdon can meet their housing number (in the Further Alterations to the London Plan). RB thought Enfield could also meet theirs. Barnet?
- Progress on commissioning of joint SHMA and Economy Study referred to. Officers were unsure whether Oxford Econometrics EEFM model was finalised (to be aware of in future consultant interviews). Authorities should brief their members as to the purpose of the studies and their limitations.
- St Albans – all agreed there had been no consultation on their housing/employment evidence base (with us). Has not checked a higher level of housing, i.e. to consider whether it would not be deliverable. **SB to speak to a colleague in SADC.**

**Gypsies and Travellers – sites and progress updates.**

- **TRDC** – consultation on revised G&T DPD closes on 14 November 2014. No new sites. Existing sites will be removed from the Green Belt. Issued clear policy statement not accepting racist comments. Monitoring indicators in AMR. CM commented on research findings -travellers use A road network; St Albans has the highest number of unauthorised encampments (2014). **SB to provide CM with GIS shape files of sites in HBC.**

**CIL update/issues**

- TRDC CIL Examination – 1 December 2015
- TRDC moving to CIVICA management tool.

- WBC and TRDC consider receipts will be a lot less than hitherto for planning obligations
- HBC – CIL charging operational from 1 December 2014.

## Projects

### Watford

- Watford Junction – Site Allocations DPD identifies a special policy area: developers to prepare a master plan
- Health campus – master plan may be redone to allocate a school or housing on the allotments. **CR to advise on the future of the hospital.**
- Redevelopment of Charter Place due to start in summer 2015 – **CR to advise further about the proposals.**
- Site Allocations DPD being combined with Development Management Policies DPD – consultation document to be published on 15 December 2014 for 6 weeks. Proposes a green cemetery – preferred options are an extension of North Watford cemetery or land off Hempstead Road (by A41). Nursery off Paddock Road is the third choice option
- Frogmore House/gas holder site: progress slow, issues of viability and effect on listed building
- Article 4 Direction proposed on Clarendon Road to control loss of offices to residential

### Three Rivers

- South Oxhey – planning application expected for 360-480 net additional dwellings. To be provided by 2021/22.
- Site Allocations DPD adopted – 25 November 2014
- CIL Examination finished on 1 December 2014
- Small delay in progress on Croxley Rail Link noted

### Paddock Road Nursery (in Hertsmere owned by Watford Council)

- CR said that there were 3 options for a green cemetery - off Hempstead Road nr A41, an extension of North Watford cemetery and at Paddock road (the least preferred). RB advised this site should be removed from Watford's plan. **CR will advise further on Watford's position (planning and cemetery provision).**

## Schools

### Three Rivers have allocated three sites

- Mill End: primary and 4 form entry secondary (free) school, to be provided by 2016/17
- Croxley Green (Baldwins Lane): secondary school, to be provided by 2016/17
- Woodside Road, Abbots Langley, to be provided by 2017/18

All school reserve sites are delineated on the Policies Map. The built areas are excluded from the Green Belt sites. Same approach is taken to Gypsy sites.

#### Watford's school needs

- 2 FE primary school is opening at Ascot Road
- Probably at Junction Station (2FE)
- Lanchester House (1FE)
- Cardiff Road allotments/Health Campus

#### Hertsmere

- 2FE primary school needed in Borehamwood. Site reserved in Elstree Way Corridor Area Action Plan.

#### **Any Other Business**

None

#### **[Post meeting note from CR Watford– July 2015:**

- **Watford Health Campus Update:**  
*September 2014: Planning approval achieved for hybrid planning application – subject to S106 agreement. 681 homes (mix of houses and flats: 35% affordable)*  
*January 2015: S106 agreement signed.*  
*A separate outline application for the Farm Terrace allotment area for 69 houses has been submitted and will be considered by WBC DC committee at a future date.*
- **Charter Place Update:**  
*Application approved, CPO completed. Work to start in Autumn this year with completion Spring 2018.*
- **Cemetery Sites Update :**  
*Hempstead Road site is in a water protection zone – in SPZ1- so now excluded.*  
*North Watford - concerns about effect on groundwater being investigated: still an option but could be ruled out.*  
*Paddock Road, Oxhey - this may become the preferred (perhaps only) option for a cemetery site. There might be a right of way into the allotment land/potential cemetery site from Elm Avenue. Further work is awaited by Lands and Parks team at Watford as to the requirements for allotment land.]*

**06/12/2019: Hertsmere Email to Three Rivers District Council regarding Hertsmere Infrastructure Delivery Plan.**

Hertsmere Borough Council has appointed consultants ARUP to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to establish the level of infrastructure provision (and associated cost) required to support growth in the Borough to 2036.

The IDP will also provide a basis for developing our new Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), which will set out the Council’s spending priorities for infrastructure projects to be funded through money we have collected from developer contributions (both via our Community Infrastructure Levy and through S106 agreements).

In order to make our Infrastructure Delivery Plan as comprehensive as possible we are contacting duty to cooperate bodies to ask for any input that they have. If there are any cross-boundary infrastructure issues or other relevant information you think we should be made aware of please let us know.

The council would be happy to receive any comments that you have by email but if you would like to speak to our consultants about the IDP and any concerns that you can also book a time slot to speak with them. Please refer to the tables below and let us know your availability.

If you could please send any comments by **Friday 20 December 2019** or if you would like a call instead, your availability as soon as possible.

Organisation	
Contact Name	
Job Title	
Contact Email	
Contact Phone	

Time	Mon 09 Dec	Tue 10 Dec	Wed 11 Dec	Thu 12 Dec	Fri 13 Dec
09:00 – 11:00					
11:00 – 13:00					
13:00 – 15:00					
15:00 – 17:00					

Time	Mon 16 Dec	Tue 17 Dec	Wed 18 Dec	Thu 19 Dec	Fri 20 Dec
09:00 – 11:00					
11:00 – 13:00					
13:00 – 15:00					

## **31\_01\_2020 Letter from Hertsmere Borough Council to Three Rivers Borough Council regarding Hertsmere's Unmet needs.**

### Hertsmere Local Plan

Hertsmere Borough Council is currently progressing work on its own Local Plan which will cover the period from 2018 to 2036.

As part of the duty to cooperate process, we have been actively engaging with all of our neighbours and stakeholders to consider how Hertsmere will meet its own identified housing and employment needs. The standard national methodology for assessing housing need has resulted in an annual requirement of 750 homes per annum (incorporating a 5% buffer, as required by the NPPF) or 13,500 homes over the plan period. By comparison, our current Local Plan which was adopted 2013, has an annual housing requirement of 266 homes. That Plan is now more than five years old and therefore deemed to be 'out of date' in determining our future strategic growth requirements.

We recognise that there is an agreement in principle to progress a joint plan for the South West Herts Housing Market Area, which would involve a comprehensive and comparative assessment of Green Belt land. Clearly this will not be in place in time to inform our new Local Plan and there remains a need for Hertsmere to bring forward this new plan without delay.

Following a Call for Sites, we have consulted on a Potential Sites for Housing and Employment document which identified and summarised the site proposals initially put forward by landowners and developers. Hertsmere's current housing and employment land capacity is considered to be solely that which can be developed on previously developed land and includes all sources on land not covered by Green Belt designation. We also recognise that there is greater emphasis in the NPPF on making effective use of land (chapter 11) and maximising densities (chapter 13) as a preliminary requirement prior to assessing where Green Belt land might be taken and whether exceptional circumstances exist for doing so. Given these requirements and to ensure that previously developed land is maximised, we have set out to:

- 1) Review the housing densities and capacities of all potential sites located within major settlement boundaries, and applying a significant uplift in the average density of residential development in accordance with paragraph 123 of the NPPF.
- 2) Assess the utilisation of local vacant housing stock as a source of untapped brownfield housing supply.
- 3) Review the achievability and deliverability of Hertsmere's own land assets.
- 4) Contact owners/occupiers of major brownfields sites who have not yet submitted any of their land holdings.

Our Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), published in 2019, points to a capacity of less than 2,500 homes on previously developed land. This includes an allowance for windfall development and existing commitments. We are hopeful that around two-thirds of our employment requirement of over 25ha of employment can be accommodated within land which has previously been safeguarded for such purposes in our current Local Plan.

There is therefore a very significant shortfall between the potential housing capacity of Hertsmere's previously developed land and the level of identified need, as well as a clear deficit of land required to meet employment needs over the plan period. As an authority with almost 80% of its area designated as Green Belt, we are therefore asking you whether your authority is able to accommodate some of the growth shortfall identified within Hertsmere. A similar request has also been sent to all neighbouring authorities and other authorities within our HMA

We are intending to arrange a Duty to Co-operate workshop in due course to discuss our emerging plan and potential cross boundary issues arising, and will be in contact again with more details about this event. In the meantime, I would be grateful for a response to this letter at the earliest opportunity.

## **10\_02\_2020 Hertsmere Email to Three Rivers District Council regarding Hertsmere Infrastructure Delivery Plan.**

Request for Three Rivers to comment on the following topics in regards to the Infrastructure Delivery plan

- **Water** – potable (general issue across county) and waste (future capacity issues especially Maple Lodge Waste Water treatment works and potentially Rye Meads)
- **Strategic Road network** – particular importance of the A1(M) and A414 to transport movements within the area.
- **Local road network** – local pressures and congestion
- **Secondary schooling** – complicated cross boundary relationships due to parental choice based on selection / faith / OFSTEAD ratings. Particularly affecting Potters Bar school places.
- **Rail** – Capacity on the route through Potters Bar and potential demands on smaller stations as a result of growth in both boroughs.
- **Green Infrastructure** – general links
- **Health** – Watford is the closest hospital for many Hertsmere residents, however, residents from Potters Bar are likely to look north and may also use The QEII Hospital in Welwyn and/or the private hospital at Hatfield. I expect there are also some links between the boroughs in terms of where residents in the villages north of Potters Bar access GP provision.

## **11/02/2020 Three Rivers District Council Email to regarding Hertsmere Infrastructure Delivery Plan.**

Agreement with what was mentioned in previous email.

## **06\_03\_2020 Three Rivers Letter regarding Position on Housing needs and Greenbelt**

### **Three Rivers District Council**

Three Rivers District Council is currently progressing work on its Local Plan which will cover the period 2016 to 2036.

The standard method for assessing local housing need has resulted in an annual requirement of 624 homes per annum. By comparison our current Local Plan, which was adopted in October 2011, has an annual housing requirement of 180 homes. That plan is now more than five years old and therefore deemed to be 'out of date' in determining our future strategic growth requirements.

Our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Urban Capacity Study indicate that less than 3,600 homes can be accommodated on land not designated as Green Belt. This includes dwellings that have been completed since 2016, existing commitments, a windfall allowance and the existing site allocations without planning permission. With regards to employment needs, we are confident that existing commitments will meet our office (B1 Use Class) requirements but there is an identified need for approximately 7ha of land for industrial/warehouse use (B1c/B2/B8 Use Class) which cannot be accommodated on land not designated as Green Belt.

As there is a very significant shortfall between the potential housing capacity of Three Rivers' previously developed land and the level of identified need as well as a clear deficit of land required to meet employment needs over the plan period, we need to consider the principle of reviewing the Green Belt boundary to accommodate that need.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' and these have to be fully evidenced and justified and that before concluding that 'exceptional circumstances' exist a plan making authority needs to demonstrate that it has examined all other reasonable options.

The examination of the Local Plan will assess whether 'exceptional circumstances' has been fully evidenced and justified by the evidence base and will also consider whether the Plan's strategy:

- Makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land
- Optimises the density of development through policies that promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards.

Given these requirements and to ensure that previously developed land is maximised, we have set out to:

- Review the housing densities and capacities of all potential sites located within settlement boundaries
- Apply a significant uplift in the average density of residential development in accordance with paragraph 123 of the NPPF.
- Assess the utilisation of local vacant housing stock
- Review the achievability and deliverability of Three River's own land assets.
- Contact owners/occupiers of potential brownfields sites who have not yet submitted any of their land holdings
- Identify opportunities in established uses within the settlement boundaries (e.g. under-used garage blocks)

In addition to the above the NPPF requires that our Plan has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the need for development.

As an authority with 76% of its area designated as Green Belt we are asking you whether your authority is able to accommodate some of the growth shortfall identified in Three Rivers. A similar request has been sent to all our neighbouring authorities and other authorities within our Housing Market Area.

At the Duty to Cooperate meeting we have arranged for the 19 March 2020 we will be able to discuss in more detail our emerging plan and any potential cross boundary issues arising.

I would be grateful for a response to this letter at the earliest opportunity. If you have any queries relating to the above request, please do not hesitate to contact me

**11\_03\_2020 Letter from Three Rivers to Hertsmere Borough Council regarding unmet Housing need.**

I write further to your letter dated 31 January 2020 which asked whether Three Rivers were able to accommodate some of the growth shortfall identified within Hertsmere.

My letter dated 6 March 2020 explained that Three Rivers, as an authority with 76% of its area designated as Green Belt, is in a similar position.

In summary, the standard method for assessing local housing need has resulted in an annual requirement of 624 homes per annum for Three Rivers. By comparison our current Local Plan, which was adopted in October 2011, has an annual housing requirement of 180 homes.

Our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Urban Capacity Study indicate that less than 3,600 homes (approximately 40% of the housing target as set by the standard method) can be accommodated on land not designated as Green Belt. This includes dwellings that have been completed since 2016, existing commitments, a windfall allowance and the existing site allocations without planning permission. With regards to employment needs, we are confident that existing commitments will meet our office (B1 Use Class) requirements but there is an identified need for approximately 7ha of land for industrial/warehouse use (B1c/B2/B8 Use Class) which cannot be accommodated on land not designated as Green Belt.

In order to ensure that previously developed land is maximised, we have set out to:

- Review the housing densities and capacities of all potential sites located within settlement boundaries
- Apply a significant uplift in the average density of residential development in accordance with paragraph 123 of the NPPF.
- Assess the utilisation of local vacant housing stock • Review the achievability and deliverability of Three Rivers' own land assets.
- Contact owners/occupiers of potential brownfields sites who have not yet submitted any of their land holdings
- identify opportunities in established uses within the settlement boundaries (e.g. under-used garage blocks)

As there is a very significant shortfall between the potential housing capacity of Three Rivers' previously developed land and the level of identified need as well as a clear deficit of land required to meet employment needs over the plan period, we are considering the principle of reviewing the Green Belt boundary to accommodate that need and we have also sent letters to all our neighbouring authorities and other authorities within our Housing Market Area, asking whether they can accommodate our growth shortfall.

Given the above, Three Rivers is unable to assist in accommodating any growth shortfall identified in Hertsmere.

At the Duty to Cooperate meeting we have arranged for the 19 March 2020 we will be able to discuss in more detail our emerging plan and any potential cross boundary issues arising.

## **19\_03\_2020 Duty to Co-operate Meeting between Three Rivers District Council and Hertsmere Borough Council.**

### Local Plan Updates

#### **Three Rivers DC**

- SHELAA process is near complete. Housing density has risen to a minimum of 50dph – higher in more accessible areas near stations
- Little vacant housing stock or TRDC owned land available within the urban area and are in the process of writing to landowners within the urban area as part of urban capacity work. We have had some responses back which have confirmed that sites are not available.
- Need to find a further 3800+ homes. New settlement scoping study – first looking at edge of existing settlement boundaries to identify land that has not been put through by the call for sites process & then potential new settlement(s) (possibly 2/3 locations identified). Would require at least 4200 dwellings to be made sustainable. 60% of the site would be considered developable and 40% would be for employment, open space etc.
- New settlement options report will consider links transport etc.
- Tender brief is needed for technical work to be completed soon. MHCLG have confirmed that they will not now be providing support in the form of consultants to get this work done.
- SGLS work may potentially find new settlement options which TRDC could use as evidence base
- It was noted that the new settlement options work may not find any appropriate land for development.
- All sites to be taken to committee in July.
- Start date of plan will be 2016 following legal advice. Will share methodology for working out housing numbers from 2016 to 2020 with Hertsmere for information.
- Housing trajectory still doesn't show 5 year supply
- Employment - existing commitments will meet our office (B1 Use Class) requirements but there is an identified need for approximately 7ha of land for industrial/warehouse use (B1c/B2/B8 Use Class) which cannot be accommodated on land not designated as Green Belt. Looking to allocate a site in south of the District. Also allocating land for Leavesden Studios Use
- Green Belt Stage 3 work has been done for new settlement

#### **Hertsmere BC**

- Start date still expected to be 2018, as per the same legal advice that TRDC received.

- Hertsmere undertaken same steps as TRDC in terms of HELAA – and took advice from Rob Jameson to ensure the document fully complied with NPPF / PPG and was robust.
- Have enough sites to meet current levels of housing need - albeit almost all being in the Green Belt and some in high / moderately performing areas and subject to other constraints.
- Also struggling in meeting requirements for small sites.
- Likely to be in the same position as TRDC in regards of the need for a stepped trajectory, as main sites won't deliver in the first 5 years
- Using PPAs to help support work with land owners where they want a higher level of service and input from Officers / specialist advisers than would otherwise be possible. Many land promoters want to work up planning applications in parallel with the local plan so they can be submitted as soon as possible after the LP is adopted.
- Approach to meeting future employment needs is expected to focus on extending existing employment areas, where space is available. An existing large safeguarded site can also become a formal designation (currently subject to application by Sky Studios).

#### Request to accommodate unmet housing and employment need

- TRDC have responded to Hertsmere and WBC letters based on its own letter regarding unmet housing need.
- HBC has similarly responded to both the TRDC and WBC letters.
- Agreement that both LPA's cannot meet any of each other's unmet housing or employment needs.

#### Education

- TRDC will be allocating a secondary school site in Carpenders Park for secondary school
- The site is adjacent to the Hertsmere boundary, however access from Hertsmere would require travelling through Bushey and South Watford.
- This site would help to relieve the pressure on Watford schools as part of the same education area.
- Any larger/new settlements will have their own provision for schools.
- HCC require 2 6fe secondary schools for the new settlement at Tyttenhanger, even if dwelling numbers decrease, which is proving problematic .
- New secondary schools also expected to be required at Bushey and at Borehamwood. It was noted that the Bushey area has a high level of secondary school provision – especially with the proposed new school at Carpenders Park in Three Rivers. However, it was noted that all these schools were likely to accommodate a high number of pupils from Watford.

## **Infrastructure:**

### **Health**

- TRDC strategic sites can accommodate their own health needs
- No identified need for GP/Health in Carpenders Park/South Oxhey area
- Hertsmere – IDP is being updated and draft first stage will be available soon. Stage 2 will look at particular sites which will address needs. CCG preference seems to be to improve / extend existing provision rather provide new GP surgeries. Potential new settlement at Tyttenhanger could largely be served by spare capacity at new health centre in London Colney.

### **Wastewater**

- TRDC – Maple Lodge will not require further land to increase its capacity. Thames Water have said they would need to update/upgrade the current system – up to infrastructure providers to deal with this
- Incomplete Water Study was discussed – TRDC suggested the Stage 1 Water Cycle Study could still be used as it is still relevant, though it was noted growth levels were now likely to be at least as high as the highest scenario considered in the study.
- HBC – Clearer picture to emerge once IDP is completed. Not known to be any need to expand the Blackbirds WWTW west of Radlett.

### **Transport**

- Acknowledge the importance of M1 and M25 and need to coordinate via COMET the impacts.
- Talked about HCCs new framework for transport assessments – quicker study. Look at sharing a methodology for this work.
- Rail – no planned infrastructure
- HBC looking to commission additional work to supplement the main COMET runs, and provide more detailed information for the area.

### **Green Infrastructure**

- Look at linking areas across boundaries in line with county-wide study. Limited opportunities between HBC and TRDC areas due to short extent of shared boundary.

### **Statement of Common Ground**

- Suggested using the PAS template, which is reflected in the document drafted for the SW Herts JSP.
- Laura to work up draft to include reference to SW Herts JSP Work
- Work on draft wording of SOCG over the next few months
- Ideally use a common template with other SW Herts authorities.

## **1\_05\_2020 Letter From Hertsmere Borough Council to Three Rivers Borough Council regarding Unmet Housing need.**

### **Three Rivers DC Local Plan**

Thank you for your letter of 6 March 2020 requesting consideration of the unmet development needs in Three Rivers.

Please note that this letter represents an informal response based on Officer opinion only, and should therefore be considered as such. The purpose of the letter is to help inform you of the process being conducted here to meet our own development needs in Hertsmere, and whether we have the capacity and capability to meet any of your own identified unmet development needs.

Hertsmere is currently progressing work on its own Local Plan which is expected to cover the period from 2018 to 2036.

As part of the duty to cooperate process, we have been actively engaging with all of our neighbours and stakeholders to consider how Hertsmere will meet its own identified housing and employment needs. In November 2018, Hertsmere consulted on the Potential Sites for Housing and Employment (PSHE) document. This identified and summarised site proposals put forward by landowners and developers for possible inclusion within our Local Plan. In total, over 2,100 individual responses were received. Documents summarising the responses received from the both the general public and, site promoters, statutory bodies, and local interest groups can be found online: <https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Planning--Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan/New-Local-Plan/New-Local-Plan-Planning-for-Growth.aspx>

### **Housing**

The Borough's adopted Local Plan is made up of the Core Strategy (adopted in January 2013), the Elstree Way Corridor Area Action Plan (adopted in 2015) and most recently, the Site Allocation and Development Management Plan (adopted in 2016). The Local Plan sets out the requirement for housing provision for the Borough between 2012 and 2027, which equates to 266 dwellings per annum. The Council's strategic policies were five years old as of January 2018, towards the end of the 2017/18 monitoring year.

During this time, a new NPPF and PPG have been released and subsequently updated. One of the most substantive changes in the revised framework and PPG is the new standard method for determining the minimum number of homes needed in local areas, which has resulted in a significant increase in the housing delivery targets. The government has advised that the 2014 sub-national population projections are to be used as the basis for calculating housing need rather than the 2016 projections. For Hertsmere this equates to a further increase in need, amounting to 714 homes per year or 12,852 homes over an 18 year plan period (plus a 5% buffer).

Hertsmere's housing capacity is considered to be solely that which can be developed on urban land and includes all sources on land not covered by Green Belt designation. There is greater emphasis in the NPPF on making effective use of land (chapter 11) and maximising densities (chapter 13). The most recent advice applies in any event to ensure the most effective use of land and applies as a preliminary requirement prior to assessing where the Green Belt land needs to be taken and whether exceptional circumstances exist for doing so.

Given this consideration, and the requirements within the NPPF Feb 2019, the updated HELAA (2019) reassessed the council's brownfield land allocation, to ascertain Hertsmere's housing capacity and ensure that urban land was maximised. This included:

- 1) Reviewing the densities and capacities of all potential sites located within major settlement boundaries, and applying a significant uplift in the average density of residential development in accordance with paragraph 123 of the NPPF.
- 2) Assessing the utilisation of local vacant housing stock as a source of untapped brownfield housing supply.
- 3) Reviewing the achievability and deliverability of Hertsmere's owned assets.
- 4) Contacting owners/occupiers of major brownfields sites who have not yet submitted any of their land holdings.

This process concluded that there is still a significant shortfall between the potential capacity of Hertsmere's urban land and the level of identified need. Hertsmere is therefore unable to consider Three Rivers' unmet housing needs as this capacity is not sufficient to meet our own needs.

Hertsmere is an authority with 79% of its land being located in the Green Belt. It is only once we identified this shortfall against housing need that the Council has considered looking at Hertsmere's Green Belt to see whether "exceptional circumstances" exist to justify release.

There remains the possibility of asking neighbouring authorities to take some of the growth shortfalls identified within Hertsmere but it is recognised that most authorities within the Housing Market Area (HMA) are already having to consider Green Belt release to meet demand. In regards to the neighbouring London Boroughs of Harrow, Enfield, and Barnet, we have written to them to enquire whether they have any additional capacity to meet Hertsmere's identified need.

However, in the absence of a joint plan for the South West Herts Authorities which would involve a comprehensive and comparative assessment of Green Belt land, the Council considers that exceptional circumstances do not exist for Hertsmere to release some of its Green Belt to meet the housing requirement of neighbouring authorities.

## **Employment**

Your letter identifies that Three Rivers does not have enough land available to meet its growth needs for B1c, B2 and B8 land uses, amounting to a shortfall of approximately 7ha. Given that our HELAA also identified a shortfall of urban sites to meet future jobs growth within Hertsmere, based on the findings of the SW Herts Economic Study Update (2019), we will need to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist to justify green belt release for economic development.

The scope, scale and location of employment-led development is still being considered but deliverable land has been promoted on the edge of Hertsmere's designated employment areas (including Centennial Park, Otterspool Way and Elstree Way) for the potential allocation of any additional employment land for B1a/B1b, B1c/B2 and B8 uses. These new allocations will need to

complement the existing employment areas nearby which would typically include

- firms within the creative industries
- scientific research and development
- finance and business services

This informal letter provides a direction and basis for discussions going forward and we look forward to further engagement with Three Rivers in relation to the production of both authorities'

## **24\_01\_2021 Duty to Co-operate Meeting Between Three Rivers District Council and Hertsmere Borough Council**

### **NOTES & ACTIONS**

#### **1. HBC Local Plan update**

No significant changes to note from previous meeting and programme as advised at recent SW Herts meeting i.e. Reg 19 programmed for May 2021 programme to be reviewed after close of Employment Call for Sites (18<sup>th</sup> March). Potential to add in a Reg 18 draft plan stage, as many other councils seem to be doing (including TRDC). Housing need remains at 750 dw/year (inclusive of 5% buffer).

HBC to advise TRDC if any sites arising from call for sites process have any cross boundary or sectoral implications. HBC Officers have advised WBC that depending if any additional suitable sites arise from this process they may be able to reconsider HBC's ability to help WBC meet some of its unmet employment needs. However any additional sites expected to be within the Green Belt so would require exceptional circumstances justification.

Delays to the plan being exacerbated by HCC requiring additional work relating to secondary school and transport matters (see below).

The Council's ability to accommodate any LPAs unmet housing need has not changed.

#### **2. TRDC Local Plan update**

Officers have now discussed recommendations regarding sites with the Leader. Like most other SW Herts LPAs almost all promoted sites to meet its local housing need. Next stage will be a draft Local Plan. Sites are likely to be articulated in terms of proposed allocations (which is needed to meet standard method need), plus 'additional sites for potential allocation' which will be sites that could be pulled into the plan by the Council or PINs if needed to provide a buffer.

Looking meet full employment needs, but not surplus space available. Mostly comprises unbuilt B8 sites and some new allocations. It was agreed that the key factor was to meet employment needs across the FEMA.

Intention is to consult on Reg 18 document from end May for 6 weeks. This will not be a fully worked up draft plan i.e. it won't include full draft policies, but will give a clear direction of travel with regard to growth locations.

Expected to contain 3 strategic housing locations - at Maple Cross, Croxley Green and Kings Langley. Likely to require a stepped trajectory due to time large sites will take to come forward.

Viability and IDP work remains outstanding.

Reg 19 scheduled to follow in November 2021.

**Action:** TRDC to provide a confidential map of expected growth locations.

### 3. Response to WBC's Reg 19 plan

There was a brief discussion re how both councils would be responding to WBC's plan. Generally no issues raised, although the employment provision required further discussion on a SW Herts basis.

### 4. Other cross boundary matters

No specific cross boundary matters warranting further discussion were raised. There was a general discussion on the approach to infrastructure matters:

#### Primary healthcare:

Difficulties in engaging CCG had been experienced by both councils. Advice seemed similar i.e. there would be no additional practices, but growth accommodated through existing capacity and expansion / relocation of existing practices.

#### Education:

A large new school was being provided at Carpenders Park on HCC owned land. This was near the HBC boundary. HBC advised that HCC was also requiring a new secondary school in this broad area i.e. to serve the growth of Bushey and eastern parts of Watford that fall into Bushey school planning area.

#### Transport:

The additional transport work being required by HCC was discussed. Both councils were concerned that this had the potential to delay plan progress and was a costs that should at least be borne by the local highway authority. There were also concerns about trying to relate large aspirational Growth and Transport Plan projects to sites – as this could affect viability and may not meet S106 tests.

TRDC's quote from (via HCC) was 76k, 11k of which related to further COMET model testing. This quote has not been accepted by TRDC and they are to discuss things further with HCC Officers.

**Action:** HBC to share outcomes of its discussions with HCC to ensure districts are taking a common approach.

#### Other:

TRDC policy not expected to pursue zero carbon development as Officers considered this was not allowable under existing Government policy.

### 5. SoCG update

It was agreed that the priority was to progress the SW Herts document. The TRDC / HBC document was expected to be limited in terms of issues that needed covering.

## **6. AOB**

The recent meeting between PAS and TRDC was discussed. It was agreed that any training relevant to other councils would be opened out to SW Herts partners and good practice tips shared.

TRDC had not been contacted for a meeting with MHCLG as per HBC yet.

**Action:** *Follow up as necessary post receipt of PAS / MHCLG advice.*

## **23\_08\_2021 Hertsmere Borough Council Officer Response to Three Rivers District Council Regulation 18 consultation Draft of the Local Plan**

Thank you for notifying and consulting Hertsmere Borough Council on the Three Rivers Regulation 18 Preferred Policy Options document. This response comes from the Planning Strategy team at Hertsmere Borough Council, and is an officer response only. A copy of the response will be shared with the Portfolio Holder for Planning who is currently away.

The document appears to be generally sound and consistent with national policy with the exception of the shortfall against the identified local housing need. Aside from this, the main spatial planning topics are suitably reviewed with comprehensive detail, and we welcome the direction of travel in relation to climate change. Further collaborative work on strategic cross boundary infrastructure remains a high priority, in particular sustainable transport options and water management.

### ***Housing target***

A primary concern is the under provision of homes against the housing target. The Preferred Options document plans for 10,919 homes against a target of 12,624 homes which represents a 14% deficit. It may be possible for this to be addressed, at least in part, by changing the start year of the Local Plan period from 2018 to 2022/23. This would effectively remove 4 years of housing requirements equating to a reduction of around 1,900 homes on the total housing target over the plan period. Although government policy/guidance on Local Plan start dates is not clear, the principal requirement is to plan for a minimum 15 year period from adoption; previous years' housing requirements are effectively addressed through the national standard method. We would request that the housing shortfall in your Preferred Options is addressed given that all authorities in the South West Herts Housing Market Area are facing the same pressures to accommodate housing need.

### ***Affordable housing***

There is no reference to the government requirement for a percentage of affordable homes to be First Homes. First Homes are now the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

### ***Infrastructure***

There is little reference to the provision of infrastructure in the Preferred Policy Options, and we could not see an up to date Infrastructure Delivery Plan amongst the evidence base documents. Infrastructure has been highlighted by local residents in Hertsmere as a key priority and we would expect growth in neighbouring authorities to clearly address infrastructure requirements, including where there are cross-boundary needs to be addressed.

### ***Climate change***

Preferred Policy Options 12 and 13 seek to reduce the carbon emissions of new development, which we welcome. However, the plan could perhaps be future-

proofed through the inclusion of a more ambitious zero-carbon target for new development.

### **Sites**

We note the preferred options include three sites which are on the borough boundary with Hertsmere, CFS14, CFS11 and CFS69a. We would ask to be kept regularly informed of progress with these and for it to be ensured that the sites are providing sufficient infrastructure within TRDC. We would ask that we are made aware of infrastructure needs and proposals at an early stage to enable joint working.

#### ***CFS11 potential secondary school site***

Paragraph 8.3 of *Part 2: Sites for Potential Allocation* references the need for a potential secondary school at Carpenders Park. We would be grateful for some clarity about how this will impact on supply and demand of school places in the Bushey/Watford school planning area given that, in particular, the Grange Academy in Bushey currently accommodates a significant number of students travelling from nearby areas in Three Rivers.

#### ***CFS69a potential housing site***

We would like to raise concerns about potential site CFS69, which adjoins the potential site for a secondary school CFS11. We would like to be clear on the justification and exceptional circumstances which would justify 495 homes in this particular Green Belt location. The SHELAA assessment for the site indicates that the site is not suitable for development and that the TRDC "Stage 2 Green Belt Review assessed harm to the Green Belt of releasing the wider parcel (in which the site is located) as very high".

A proposed housing density of 15-30dph is indicated in the SHELAA for a range of 338-675 dwellings. If the release of the site can be justified in green belt terms, we would encourage a higher density to be sought within the site in order to make effective and efficient use of the release of valuable green belt land.

## **08\_12\_2023 Response from Hertsmere Borough Council via Email to Three Rivers Regulation 18 Part 4 Document.**

Thank you for consulting us on the Regulation 18 Part 4 document.

Our comments primarily relate to the overall approach in your latest consultation document rather than specific sites or any of the detailed changes from your previous consultations. The comments below are made at an officer-level only.

### **Housing Growth Challenges**

Although Hertsmere is a slightly more populous district than Three Rivers, it is clear that there are several shared characteristics between Three Rivers District Council and Hertsmere Borough Council in terms of settlement pattern and size, and green belt coverage (both around three quarters of the local authority area). Lack of available brownfield land is acknowledged to be a common denominator between the boroughs due to the relatively small settlement sizes and the absence of historic large scale industry in the areas.

The local authorities also both face similar challenges in terms of affordability, scoring particularly poorly in the affordability index, facing challenges with the delivery of enough homes and challenging housing land supply positions.

Addressing the acute need for housing is vital so that, in particular, young people do not have to move away from the area. We note that paragraph 2.3 acknowledges this albeit that the extent to which housing need can be met is caveated.

### **Evidence for Housing Need**

We share your concern about the continued use of 2014-based household projections by central government but ultimately that remains the basis for calculating housing need under the standard method.

However, if a local authority is planning to provide significantly less homes than set out in the standard methodology, (42% of the total need in the proposed approach in your preferred option consultation), there needs to be clear and justified reasons why this is the case.

### **The Green belt as a Constraint to Development**

We recognise the local concerns over green belt development and this can be an important factor when considering future housing growth. However, we are concerned that the level of reduction proposed, when compared to both previous consultation and in particular, the quantum suggested by officers in the report of 24 August 2023 to the Local Plan Sub-Committee has not been clearly justified. The report to the Sub-Committee had proposed a reduced housing requirement of 7,463 homes, whereas your preferred option consultation proposes only 4,852 homes. Several strategic sites are not included in this preferred option consultation whereas they were included in the report which was recommended to your Local Plan Sub-Committee.

Figure 1 represents a rational basis for considering sites to go forward into the plan but we note that no sites from the Moderate-High or High Green Belt harm bands have gone forward into the consultation. We consider it important that there is sufficient granularity in terms of the assessment criteria decision-making and note that none of the strategic sites falling into areas of higher Green Belt harm were deemed to provide benefits that outweigh harm to the Green Belt. This has contributed to a significantly reduced total towards the overall Local Plan target and would suggest that more robust, technical justification may be needed for the low growth option.

### **Housing Sites**

We have reviewed the housing sites proposed and do not have any specific comments. We do not consider any to be close enough to our centres of population or large enough to impact directly on our infrastructure. However, we will want to continue working with you on areas of cross boundary interest, including strategic infrastructure requirements.

### **Concluding Comments**

We recognise that there are challenges in justifying such a housing figure which deviates so much from the standard method. However, such a deviation has the potential to impact on neighbouring authorities within the same housing market area. In the absence of more robust justification for the approach being taken, we also have concerns that the removal of a number of strategic sites from the plan moving forward will be problematic in terms of the soundness of the plan.