

CABINET

20 JULY 2017

EASTLEIGH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: EMERGING APPROACH

Report of the Senior Specialist (Local Plan)

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet recommend to Council:

- (1) Note the Eastleigh Local Plan (2016 – 2036) Emerging Approach, as set out in Appendix 1, to include:
 - (a) Development requirements over that period of 14,580 new homes and 108,000 sq. m of new employment space;
 - (b) A Strategic Growth Option to the north and east of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak, to accommodate a new community of approximately 5,200 new homes, 30,000 sq. m of employment space, retail centres, schools, other community facilities and open spaces; approximately 95 new homes at Allbrook Hill; alongside a new link road north of Allbrook, Bishopstoke and Fair Oak; (noting that the development quantum is subject to further testing); and
 - (c) Other new development sites to accommodate in total approximately 1,704 new homes (see Appendix 9) and 110,940 sq. m of new employment (see para. 33);
 - (d) Protection of the countryside gaps, as identified in Appendix 10 (noting some changes to the gaps approved by Cabinet on 15 June 2017);
 - (e) Strategic, Development Management and Site Policies on other sites to guide the provision and form of development and infrastructure, and protect important environmental and heritage areas, as set out in paragraphs 15, 119 and 120.
- (2) Note that the Eastleigh Local Plan Emerging Approach is based on the wide range of emerging evidence available at this stage, but that important evidence remains outstanding, and that the Council will need to make a definitive decision on the Local Plan once all the relevant and key evidence is available.
- (3) Approve the use of the Eastleigh Local Plan Emerging Approach as set out in recommendation 1.

- (a) as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, noting that only limited weight can be given to it at this stage.
 - (b) as the basis for focussed engagement with local communities, neighbouring Councils and statutory agencies through the 'duty to co-operate, and with developers.
- (4) Gives delegated authority to the Senior Specialist (Local Plan), in consultation with Managers and the Leader of the Council, to update the Local Development Scheme as needed prior to the submission of the Local Plan.

Summary

This report sets out the purpose of the Local Plan; the stages of its preparation so far; the status of the Emerging Local Plan; the vision and strategy; the need for new development (including homes and employment); the basis for the emerging selection of a Strategic Growth Option (SGO), a draft policy and key delivery issues for the SGO; the basis for the emerging selection of other housing sites; the approach to retail, leisure, gypsy and traveller uses, countryside gaps, urban edges, and development management policies. The proposals for each Local Area and Parish are set out in Appendix 13.

It is fully recognised that these recommendations represent change, including significant change to the communities of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak. The Council wants to work closely with communities to understand all of their concerns, discuss the emerging evidence, minimise environmental and other impacts, and maximise opportunities (for example from the new transport infrastructure, retail and community facilities).

Statutory Powers

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Localism Act 2011

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Introduction

1. The emerging Local Plan (2016 – 2036) (the 'Local Plan') identifies the need for development and infrastructure (e.g. transport, schools, health, green spaces, etc.); appropriate development sites; areas of environmental protection; and policies to guide individual developments. The Local Plan will be the statutory document against which individual planning applications are

determined. The Plan therefore has a key role in shaping the future of the Borough.

2. The previous draft Local Plan (2011 – 2029) was found ‘unsound’ by an independent planning inspector because he felt it did not fully meet the need for homes overall, affordable homes or short term delivery. The Council needs to take a robust approach to ensure that it achieves a ‘sound’ plan in accordance with the Government’s planning policy, the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”).
3. The key stages in preparing the Local Plan so far are as follows:
 - (a) 2015: The Council commenced work on the new Local Plan (2016 – 2036).
 - (b) December 2015: The Council undertook public consultation on an ‘Issues and Options’ paper, approved by Cabinet and Council on 8th and 10th December 2015.
 - (c) June 16th 2016: The Cabinet was briefed on the public responses to the Issues and Options consultation. Understandably given the potential for significant change around existing communities a wide range of public concerns were raised. These concerns and the Council’s initial response is set out in Appendix 3. These issues are further addressed in the main report below.
 - (d) December 15th 2016: The Cabinet and Council agreed the Development Distribution Strategy and Principles and a strategic direction, including further work on the development proposals north of Bishopstoke / Fair Oak, noting those on Allington Lane lacked strategic infrastructure, and the need for smaller sites.
 - (e) April 6th 2017: The Cabinet agreed an initial response to the comments made at the Issues and Options stage. (These responses have now been extended to reflect the current stage, see Appendix 3).
 - (f) June 15th 2017: The Cabinet agreed a preliminary designation of countryside gaps.

The Emerging Local Plan

4. The Council has been continuing to collect further evidence; and conducting ongoing discussions both with organisations with which it has a statutory ‘duty to co-operate’¹, strategically through the PUSH Spatial Position Statement

¹ For example, other Councils including neighbouring Councils / all Councils within the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, including Hampshire County Council (e.g. as transport and education authority); the South Downs National Park Authority; and statutory agencies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways England, Historic England and the Forestry Commission.

and on specific issues relating to the Local Plan; and with other environmental organisations, developers and a local action group.

5. The Emerging Local Plan has been informed by all these considerations, and is transparent about a 'direction of travel'. It also enables further testing of the evidence and approach, as follows.
6. Evidence to inform any Local Plan process is usually based on a combination of data, surveys, professional and wider judgement from everyone who has an interest in the Plan (e.g. communities², 'duty to co-operate' and other statutory bodies, environmental organisations, infrastructure providers, transport operators, developers, etc.). This report sets out where issues have been informed by draft published evidence³. This evidence includes a draft Sustainability Appraisal which tests the implications of the 8 Strategic Growth Options (SGOs), general policy approaches and other sites⁴. All of this evidence needs to be discussed more widely before it is finalised.
7. Any views expressed in this report are designed to prompt that further discussion, enabling the emerging approach to be further tested, and refined or changed as needed. That discussion will also take the form of engagement with stakeholders in the autumn and their views will be used to inform the proposed submission Local Plan. This report also sets out issues where evidence has been commissioned but needs to be completed and considered as part of the overall balance of issues prior to a definitive recommendation and decision on the 'proposed submission' Local Plan.
8. Interested parties can then make written representations on the 'proposed submission' Local Plan. After this, the Council submits a Plan which, in light of all this work, it considers to be 'sound'. The Plan is examined by an independent Planning Inspector in the light of the representations and evidence. If the Inspector finds the plan 'sound' the Council can proceed to adopt the Local Plan.
9. The processes described above will lead to a robust definitive recommendation to the Council on a 'proposed submission' Local Plan, and increase the likelihood of securing a 'sound' Local Plan at examination.
10. The following is the initial timetable anticipated for adopting the Local Plan. This is subject to ongoing monitoring of the programme to ensure that the appropriate evidence and engagement is completed prior to the Council making a decision on the 'proposed submission' Local Plan:

² Both in and outside the Borough.

³ Go to www.eastleigh.gov.uk; then "Planning and Building"; then "Local Plan"; then "Emerging Eastleigh Local Plan" and see "New Evidence".

⁴ The Sustainability Appraisal: Issues and Options stage covers the SGOs and key overarching policy approaches; Emerging Local Plan stage covers the 41 Other Sites covered by the comparative assessment.

- (a) mid July – mid November 2017: Completion of final evidence.
 - (b) Autumn 2017: further public engagement.
 - (c) Mid December 2017: Cabinet / Council makes a decision on the definitive ‘proposed submission’ Plan.
 - (d) January / February 2017: formal consultation on the ‘proposed submission’ Local Plan.
 - (e) June 2018: submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State.
 - (f) June - November 2018: public examination of the Local Plan (including hearing sessions in Summer 2018 and potential consultation on ‘Main Modifications in Autumn 2018).
 - (g) early 2019: Council adopts the Local Plan.
11. The timetable to adoption set out above involves a delay of approximately 8 months to that set out in the Local Development Scheme⁵ (although no delay compared to the timetable set out to Cabinet in April 2017). The delay is caused primarily by the need to ensure sufficient evidence is gathered and tested through engagement to justify the Plan. It is proposed that the Local Development Scheme will be updated under delegated powers to reflect the latest timescales following a review. In the meantime the Council is keeping everyone informed of the latest timescale via the website and newsletters.

Analysis

Local Plan Vision and Strategy

12. This section of the Plan sets out how it helps to meet the Council’s corporate objectives of achieving:
- (a) A prosperous place – provision of affordable, accessible and adaptable homes, and high quality job opportunities;
 - (b) A green Borough – maintaining and improving settlement gaps, the countryside, historic environment, and green infrastructure; addressing climate change, air quality, congestion and improving accessibility by ‘non-car’ means of travel;
 - (c) A healthy community – improving health, education and cultural provision and the quality of life.
13. It then translates this into a Local Plan vision:

⁵ September 2016

14. “To ensure development in Eastleigh borough and its communities delivers a strong and sustainable economy with an adequate supply of housing and infrastructure that supports improved standards of living for residents while protecting the distinct identity of towns and villages and preventing urban sprawl; promoting thriving and healthy communities; and maintaining an attractive and sustainable environment that residents value”.
15. The Plan then sets out objectives; and strategic policies on sustainable development; the settlement hierarchy; new development; the strategic growth option; countryside, countryside gaps and the coast; green infrastructure; community facilities; and transport.

The Need for Development

16. The NPPF is clear that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. It also requires that there should be a 5 year supply of specific deliverable sites, and a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. The objectively assessed need is set out below and in the published evidence, to enable further testing through engagement with all interested parties. Therefore it is considered premature to adopt this for development management⁶ context at this stage.

New Homes

17. The latest evidence on objectively assessed need for new homes has been undertaken by PUSH⁷, represents evidence of Eastleigh Borough Council’s ‘duty to co-operate’ with surrounding Councils, is based on housing market areas⁸ and districts, and takes into account all the following factors in a way considered to be in line with national guidance:
 - (a) Demographic / household projections: the natural change in the population and number of households. The main driver of future needs is more people living for longer in smaller households.
 - (b) Economic projections: based on the LEP Solent Economic Strategy’s aim to achieve 2.7% economic growth. Whilst this growth is focussed first on ‘up skilling’ local residents, it will also attract new people in to the area to work (net in-migration).

⁶ i.e. the determination of planning applications.

⁷ South Hampshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Jan. 2014) and Objectively Assessed Housing Need Update (March 2016).

⁸ i.e. the Southampton housing market area within PUSH

- (c) The affordability of homes: In Eastleigh Borough house prices are 9.3 - 10.2⁹ times higher than incomes, which means it is very difficult for younger people to get their foot on the housing ladder. At 2016 there were 1,890 households on the Council's housing register. An 'uplift' in housing provision is needed to improve affordability, address overcrowding and help to provide affordable homes.
18. The objectively assessed need for Eastleigh was identified by PUSH to be 580 dwellings per annum.
19. The PUSH Statement promotes major growth in Southampton (19,450¹⁰ dwellings) but recognises that there are limits to how far the city can grow, and strong environmental constraints in other areas like the New Forest. Therefore the Statement sets a target for 650 dwellings per annum in Eastleigh Borough to help meet needs across the wider housing market area. It should be noted that the Statement was not subject to public consultation. 650 dwellings per annum amounts to 14,580 new homes (2016 – 2036¹¹) which is considered should form the proposed requirement to be tested through the Local Plan process. It is important to note that the housing need in Eastleigh Borough is not isolated from and is interrelated to the needs of the wider housing market area. National policy requires neighbouring Councils to work together to meet these wider needs.
20. On the basis of PUSH's assessment, the PUSH Statement's provision results in an unmet need across the wider housing market area of 2,160 dwellings to 2034. Therefore the PUSH target for each Council is expressed as a minimum. It should be emphasised that this applies to all Councils, and that (based on this report) Eastleigh Borough Council is already testing the potential for major growth.
21. Since the completion of the PUSH Statement, the Council has re-assessed its own objectively assessed need taking account of recent appeal decisions and affordability indicators. Therefore the Council's Cabinet agreed that the objectively assessed need for the Borough is now 630 dwellings per annum. This means that the 650 dwelling per annum target would still fully meets the Borough's own needs. It also means that Eastleigh is meeting less of the unmet needs from the wider housing market area and that (all other factors being equal) the unmet need across this wider area would increase to 3,310 dwellings. It should also be noted that this gap is only for the period to 2034, whereas the Local Plan is looking to 2036; and that there are additional unmet needs within the wider housing market area (primarily from the New

⁹ Median house prices 9.3 times higher than median annual incomes; cheapest quartile of house prices 10.2 times higher than lowest quartile of annual incomes. 2016.

¹⁰ 2011 - 2034

¹¹ The Push requirement is from 2011 to 2034. This is rebased by subtracting completions from 2011 to 2016 and extending the time frame by two years based on 650 dwellings per annum.

Forest National Park); and from the adjoining Portsmouth housing market area.

22. Some (e.g. housebuilders) consider that the Council should plan for a higher level of housing. However, subject to further engagement, the objectively assessed need is considered to be robust and the 650 dwelling per annum target already meets a significant proportion of needs in the wider housing market area: 30% of overall provision; 49% of the provision in 'greenfield' Councils (i.e. outside of Southampton).
23. Immediately after the PUSH Statement was completed (PUSH Joint Committee 7 June 2016), the UK decided on the 23rd June 2016 to leave the EU (Brexit). The long term effect this will have on economic growth (if any) and on international in-migration will not become clear for many years and will depend in part on the form Brexit takes. It is considered reasonable to assume that net in-migration from the E.U. will reduce to some extent. However this is likely to be a partial reduction, and is just one source of people moving in to the Borough, which itself is just one element of housing need. The direct effect on the overall need for housing is therefore considered likely to be relatively modest. The effect on the relative economic growth of South Hampshire relative to other parts of the UK (if any), and therefore the effects on domestic net in migration to South Hampshire and Eastleigh and hence housing needs is unknown.
24. The Government is also intending to publish a standard methodology for assessing housing needs. This, or other changes in the housing market, could increase or reduce needs.
25. The Council intends to commission a review of housing needs closer to the examination to ensure it is informed by the most up to date evidence.
26. Finally it is important to stress that even if needs were to fall this would not mean the Council should stop testing the provision recommended in this report. Across the wider housing market area there is an unmet need of 2,160 to 3,310 dwellings. Therefore if needs were to fall by 4% - 6% across this area this would simply remove this unmet need, not the need for the provision which is being recommended. Only if needs dropped by an additional 21% (or 32%)¹² would the need for the Strategic Growth Option (or the SGO and all of the other green field sites) identified by the Local Plan be eliminated. This scenario is currently considered to be unlikely.
27. In short there is considered to be a need for the new homes identified by the Local Plan. This will make a significant contribution to helping younger people and others in need purchase or rent a home of their own.
28. It is recommended that, in line with the Development Distribution Strategy and Principles, the Council meets most of these needs in a 'Strategic Growth

¹² Based on the reduction needed to the Borough's target 2011 - 2036

Option, with the remainder being met on a range of smaller sites. The Strategic Growth Option enables two new communities to be created with a mix of new homes, employment, shops, schools, community facilities, green spaces and the provision of significant new transport and other infrastructure. The range of smaller sites ensure a choice and continuity of development sites to facilitate delivery and maintain the 5 year supply of homes.

29. Appendices 5 and 7 sets out the latest supply of sites, and includes an allowance for the non-delivery of a proportion of sites. To meet the overall need for new homes over the Local Plan period to 2036, after accounting for completions, and the likely significant delivery from sites with planning permission¹³ and other urban sites, there is considered at this stage to be a need for additional green field sites to deliver 5,102 homes. As set out later in this report, the recommended emerging Local Plan proposes locations which will deliver the following homes within the plan period to 2036 (these totals are set out at the end of Appendices 5 and 7):
- A Strategic Growth Option – 3,350 homes (5,200 in total with the remainder beyond the plan period);
 - A range of other sites – 1,704 homes (this equates to 1,100¹⁴ dwellings allocated in the ‘2029 plan’ and 604 new allocations¹⁵).
30. The SGO and other sites total 5,054 dwellings, which effectively fully¹⁶ meets the currently proposed Local Plan requirement. The suitability of these sites and the overall environmental capacity of the Borough will be tested through the Local Plan process to confirm whether or not the currently proposed requirement (which is above the objectively assessed need for the Borough) is appropriate. The likely trajectory of the 604 dwellings on new allocations is being assessed to confirm the Council will maintain its 5 year land requirement.
31. The Council’s assessment of affordable housing needs has been undertaken in line with Government guidance and takes account of the backlog as well as future needs. Based on the original objectively assessed need of 580 dwellings per annum it assesses that 165 or 28% of these dwellings should be ‘affordable’. Sites of 10 dwellings or less do not contribute to affordable homes and so larger sites need to achieve a higher percentage. For now, it is recommended the Council maintains its 35% target. This will be reviewed in the light of the changing nature of affordable homes, the results of the viability

¹³ or resolution

¹⁴ 1,203 homes in Appendix including a site with permission and so already counted.

¹⁵ Appendices 5 and 7 identify a need for 652 dwellings on new greenfield sites.

¹⁶ To be precise there is a shortfall of 48 dwellings (i.e. 5,102 – 5,054 = 48; or 652 – 604 = 48). This shortfall is 0.3% of the total 14,580 dwelling requirement. Officers will continue to monitor the situation.

study, the need to pay for other important infrastructure, and that the assessment of overall needs has been increased to 630 dwellings, in a response to and in-order to improve affordability.

Employment Need and Sites

32. The need for new employment floor space is based on the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategy. This aims to achieve 2.7% economic and 0.8% employment growth per annum. The Strategy is underpinned by forecasts of employment growth in different sectors. Further research commissioned by PUSH translates this in to a need for office, industrial and warehouse space, taking account of the commercial market, changing working practices, and key economic drivers. The PUSH Position Statement distributes this need to individual Councils taking account of local economic forecasts and the growth potential in different sectors, past delivery rates, the 'cities first' approach, the availability of sites, locations attractive to investment, and the proposed housing distribution. The requirement in Eastleigh Borough (2016 – 2036) is 108,000 sq. m of floor space¹⁷.
33. The potential supply of sites is set out in Appendix 6. The requirement for 108,000 sq. m of employment floor space is based on a net additional gain (i.e. new space minus the loss of space). The supply takes account of the completions and losses that have occurred, and planning permissions likely to be delivered. It also takes account of likely future losses (e.g. sites being redeveloped for housing), which once factored in means the actual overall need for new sites totals 110,940 sq. m. The initial recommendation is based on allocating the sites which were identified by the previous 2029 plan. Appendix 6 includes a location map¹⁸ and a list of all the main sites. However on this basis there is still a shortfall to 2036 of 29,850 sq. m or 28% of the requirement. This will be considered further in discussion with interested parties before a final recommendation is made. Possible options include working to secure the delivery of all the 2029 allocations (see Appendix 6); and considering whether or not it would be appropriate to identify further sites or develop identified sites at a higher density. The Emerging Local Plan identifies land at Eastleigh Riverside and the Airport Economic Area for employment led development and the full Chickenhall Lane Link Road, on the basis that the Council strongly supports the delivery of these important schemes. At this stage the funding of the road is uncertain and therefore the delivery of the employment has not been assumed in the above figures. This is consistent with the Government's NPPF which seeks a 'reasonable prospect' that sites and infrastructure can be delivered. The Council continues to work with Government to seek support for the funding of the road.

¹⁷ The Push requirement is from 2011 to 2034. This is rebased by subtracting completions from 2011 to 2016 and extending the time frame by two years on a pro-rata basis.

¹⁸ It excludes the SGO employment (a precise location is not fixed within the SGO) and 1 minor site.

Selection of Strategic Growth Options (SGOs) and Other Sites

34. This is a very brief summary of the relevant parts of the NPPF and PUSH Spatial Position Statement. Planning should create high quality places, support the re-use of previously developed land, access to public transport, walking, cycling, local and community facilities, and large scale developments where appropriate, conserve and enhance the natural environment, address climate change and flood risk. Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic, and have a reasonable prospect that infrastructure can be delivered. In broad terms the PUSH Statement continues these themes, recognises the importance of green infrastructure and countryside gaps, and identifies strategic development locations, including the potential capacity in the northern part of Eastleigh Borough (to be determined by the Local Plan) to accommodate new development, subject to significant investment in transport / infrastructure.
35. The key emerging draft evidence to date includes the emerging Sustainability Appraisal; the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA); comparative assessment of SGOs (incorporated in this report); the SGO developers' initial master plans (options B/C and E); the comparative assessment of other sites (summarised in this report); the Habitat Regulations Assessment (Issues and Options stage); countryside gap appraisal; landscape sensitivity appraisal; PUSH Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; previous transport assessment (2013); public transport assessment; open spaces and sports pitches studies.
36. The following approach is informed by the NPPF and PUSH Statement, the Development Distribution Strategy and Principles approved by Council in December 2016, the issues raised in the public response to the Issues and Options paper, the sustainability appraisal and the other available evidence.
37. A number of SGOs and other sites can be eliminated at an early stage. A comparative assessment is then undertaken of the remaining sites against the following issues:
 - (a) Transport and Accessibility. The aim is to minimise pollution by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport, and to ensure access to facilities for people without cars. The issues considered are the proximity to the nearest shopping centres (and the size of that centre), to other supermarkets, schools, doctor's surgeries and public transport (including the frequency / destination of those services, and for the SGOs the potential to improve those services).
 - (b) Countryside Gaps. The aim is to maintain the separate identity of individual settlements. The issue to consider is whether a site is in a gap and would erode the purpose of that gap.
 - (c) Landscape Sensitivity. The aim is to protect or manage change in landscapes with higher sensitivity to change. The issue to consider is whether the characteristics of a landscape make it sensitive to change.

- (d) Biodiversity. The aim is to protect and enhance biodiversity. The issue to consider is whether an ecology designation affects or is close to a site, the importance of that designation, and the potential impact on it.
- (e) Other Environmental Considerations. The aims are various. The issues to consider are whether a site is of good agricultural land value or is affected by noise, air quality, contamination, mineral reserves, public open space, heritage / archaeology, pylon or pipeline issues.
- (f) Deliverability. The sites which, in the light of the above issues, are preferred should be deliverable. This covers a range of issues for the SGOs. For the other (smaller) sites it relates more to relatively detailed site specific issues. See below for both.

Strategic Growth Options (SGOs)

- 38. The Council¹⁹ has set the principle of exploring the delivery of a substantial proportion of new green field development in a Strategic Development Area (towards the upper end of the 4,000 – 6,000 dwelling range), in order to achieve a degree of self-containment and to deliver significant new infrastructure (including roads).
- 39. The Issues and Options Paper identified 8 SGOs.
- 40. The following SGOs reflect a series of smaller sites which are now assessed in 'Other Sites' below:
 - SGO A (Extensions to settlements); and
 - SGO F (extending Hedge End and Botley).
- 41. It is considered that the following SGOs are not appropriate for housing led development so are excluded from further assessment:
 - SGO G (Hamble Airfield). This area is allocated by the County Council for sand and gravel extraction and then restoration to grazing, nature conservation, open space, public access and woodland. Eastleigh Borough Council has already agreed²⁰ there should be no significant development in the Hamble peninsula, given the transport and countryside gap issues.
 - SGO H (Redevelopment of Eastleigh Riverside for employment uses). The Issues and Options paper did not envisage this would be for housing led development and this remains the case.

¹⁹ 15th December 2016: Development Distribution Strategy and Principles

²⁰ 15 December 2016 Council: Development Distribution Strategy and Principles. Reproduced in Appendix 4 of this 2017 report.

42. It is considered the following SGOs should be assessed further, based on the latest understanding of their potential development concepts:
- (a) SGO B/C²¹ – north / north east of Bishopstoke / Fair Oak; and Allbrook; with link road: approximately 5,200 homes, 30,000 sq. m of employment space, a district and local shopping centre, a secondary and primary schools.
 - (b) SGO D²² – south of Bishopstoke / West of Horton Heath: approximately 1,700 homes, 13,200 sq. m of employment space, a local centre and primary school;
 - (c) SGO E²³ – north of West End / M27: approximately 2,500 homes, 20,000 sq. m of employment space, a local centre and primary school.
43. The concepts for options B/C and E are more advanced as they are being actively promoted by developers. Any further collective reference to the SGOs (e.g. “all of”, “none of”, refers to options B/C, D and E only).
44. Options B and C are being promoted together to help secure the delivery of the link road and other facilities. The initial view is that it would not be appropriate to combine D and E together because this would lead to continuous development from Southampton city centre to northern Fair Oak, a distance of up to approximately 11 kilometres. It is also currently unclear how and whether transport measures could be put in place to effectively address traffic congestion from this scale of development in this location.
45. It should be noted that either SGOs D or E alone deliver significantly fewer dwellings than SGO B/C. Therefore to meet the Local Plan targets they would require 850 to 1,350 dwellings to be provided elsewhere. Given the recommendation is to allocate all other sites in the Borough considered to be suitable, it is initially considered likely that the main appropriate remaining area for these dwellings to be located would be within a part of the SGO not selected. In other words, in this case it would likely be in that part of SGO B/C adjacent to Fair Oak (part of option C). The relative merits of a Local Plan based on any of these SGOs are currently considered to be as follows (though no final view has yet been taken).

Transport / Accessibility

46. A detailed analysis of the transport model will further inform the views set out in this section. Appendix 14 sets out an analysis of current travel patterns

²¹ Based on an initial assessment by Council officers, which results in approximately 5,200 dwellings rather than 6,000 dwellings advanced by the developers’ initial master planning published in December 2016.

²² Based simply on the Issues and Options paper, excluding permissions granted, and broad brush density / mix assumptions.

²³ Based on the developers’ initial master planning published in December 2016.

from Bishopstoke / Fair Oak (close to SGO B/C and D) and West End / Hedge End (close to SGO E).

Local Trips

47. SGO B/C is likely to accommodate at least double the number of homes and therefore people as SGOs D or E. Therefore it will support additional facilities including a larger district centre (considered likely to include a medium scale supermarket) and a secondary school. It also has the physical capacity to deliver at least 50% more employment space. This greater range of facilities is also more likely to effectively serve the existing community of Fair Oak than, in particular, those in option E would serve West End. This is because the residents of Fair Oak are currently served by only a small village centre. Only 7% do their convenience (food) shopping there, with 93% going further afield (e.g. to Eastleigh or Hedge End). The physical geography of the area means that the new SGO's district centre (and supermarket) could be located so that it is in easy reach of the existing residents of Fair Oak, as well as the new residents of the SGO, making it an attractive local alternative to the current more distant options. Conversely the residents of West End are already served by a larger centre. 28% already do their convenience shopping there and a further 28% in nearby Hedge End. SGO E's new local centre would be smaller, further away from most existing residents, and separated from them by the M27 motorway, so is less likely to encourage more existing residents to shop more locally.
48. Therefore SGO B/C is considered significantly more likely to encourage a switch to more existing residents of Fair Oak and new residents of the SGO meeting their 'day to day' and 'week to week' needs within their community, either by walking, cycling or short car journey. This is considered likely to reduce congestion on the wider network, as well as promote a vibrant community.

Wider Trips.

49. People living in the SGOs will also travel further afield for employment, shopping and leisure trips. In terms of key destinations, Southampton offers the most facilities, and Winchester, Eastleigh and Hedge End are also significant destinations.
50. Option E is closer to Southampton, the largest single destination. However jobs in particular are dispersed across South Hampshire, with only 19% located in the city. People also often chose to work or shop in destinations closer to where they live (or indeed live closer to where they work). Based on the travel patterns of people living in nearby communities, residents of options B/C and D are, in broad terms, almost as likely to work or shop in Eastleigh as residents of option E are to work or shop in Southampton. (See Appendix 14). Furthermore options B/C and D are broadly only half the distance from Eastleigh as option E is from Southampton. Options B/C and D are also closer to Winchester than option E. It should be noted that option E is close to Hedge End, which is also a significant shopping and to some extent employment destination; and Southampton as a major centre will still attract

some trips from options B/C and D. The key point is that trip patterns are diverse and nuanced. Based on the patterns of nearby existing communities, the average distance travelled to work by residents of option E is likely to be slightly shorter than from options B/C and D (see Appendix 14), and the same may be true for 'non local' shopping trips. However in overall terms the differences between the options is considered likely to be relatively slight.

Public Transport (Existing and Potential for Enhancements)

51. Options D or E are adjacent to a railway line whereas options B/C and D is not. However there is no indication a station would be provided alongside option E, given the (relatively limited) scale of development and the proximity of Hedge End station. Option E is only 2 km from Hedge End station whereas options B/C and D are 4km from Eastleigh station, although the latter does serve more destinations (notably Southampton). An initial feasibility study is being undertaken for a 'Solent Metro'. It is understood this is focussing on the Southampton – Eastleigh corridor. If feasible it is possible that it could be extended to serve options D or E in the longer term. However at present, this is at best very uncertain, given the overall cost and route feasibility issues. On the whole, it is considered that option E may have a slight advantage in terms of the potential to be served by rail, although none of the options score particularly strongly in this regard.
52. The key existing bus services which serve parts of²⁴:
 - (a) Options B/C include 3 buses an hour to Eastleigh / Portswood / Southampton and 1 bus an hour to Winchester.
 - (b) Option D: the additional development area is out of range of any existing bus services.
 - (c) Option E is 1 bus an hour to Bitterne / Southampton (only viable with financial support from the County Council).
53. Therefore SGO B/C is significantly better served by existing buses than SGO D or E.
54. The viability of new bus routes depends on the number of vehicles required to operate it (based on the length of route and frequency of service); and the likely patronage (based on the number of people served by the bus route, where they want to go to, and the likelihood they will use the bus). Council officers have undertaken an assessment of the likely viability of new services, based on 2 or 3 services an hour. At this early stage this demonstrates all additional services have 'negative' viability. However this is a cautious assessment which does not take into account education trips (which are a significant source of bus custom), the ability to design new development to encourage bus use, and operational efficiencies. The assessment indicates that the viability gap for services to key destinations is generally significantly

²⁴ i.e. within 400 metres of part of the development

less for options B/C than option E. On this basis it is currently considered that SGOs B/C may be significantly closer to securing better bus services. This is because they offer a significantly greater customer base. See Appendix 14. Furthermore it is considered that one of the existing 20 minute frequency services to Fair Oak may be capable of being extended into the SGO.

Road Traffic

55. The Local Plan needs to provide for 14,580 homes. Whilst it should be noted that this is partially to meet the needs of people already living and using roads in the general area, it is considered unlikely that this scale of development can be accommodated anywhere in the Borough without there being some additional traffic congestion somewhere. Option E is promoting a package of transport improvements to existing junctions and roads in the immediate area. Option B/C is promoting a new link road from the development to the Allbrook Link Road and hence the M3 motorway (at junction 12). This is considered to be a significant addition to the overall road network in the northern part of the Borough. Therefore it may be that options B/C will do most in overall terms to manage traffic congestion on the road network as a result of new development. It might be that options B/C will add to traffic congestion in the Allbrook Hill area and do more to effectively manage congestion along Bishopstoke Road into Eastleigh and through Colden Common / Twyford; whereas it might be that options D or E will simply add to traffic congestion on the wider network. However the position is complex and needs to be further tested through the detailed analysis of the transport model runs. In national policy terms there needs to be a reasonable prospect that the infrastructure associated with any of the SGOs can be delivered. This needs to be tested further (see below). It can reasonably be suggested at this stage that SGO B/C might deliver the most infrastructure benefits and have more issues to resolve to ensure a reasonable prospect of delivery of that significant infrastructure. It might be that the more limited infrastructure associated with SGOs D and E is easier to deliver but that this approach might put more pressure on existing infrastructure. Finally it should be noted that SGOs B/C, D and E will all involve extra traffic passing constrained rail bridges²⁵. All these issues need to be tested further.

Countryside Gaps

56. Countryside gaps maintain the separation between and distinct identity of individual towns and villages which are relatively close to each other. None of the SGOs are in designated²⁶ countryside gaps. However the scale of each SGO is such that the Council should consider where a risk of future coalescence between towns and villages might then arise such that a new countryside gap needs to be designated.

²⁵ SGO B/C via the new link road and Allbrook rail bridge, SGOs D or E via the Allington Lane rail bridge.

²⁶ In neither the adopted 2001 – 2011 Local Plan nor the draft 2011 – 2029 Local Plan.

57. SGO B/C would enable a clear countryside gap to be maintained with Colden Common appropriate to the scale of the settlements it is separating, and a small gap between the two new communities north of Bishopstoke and north of Fair Oak.
58. Turning to options D or E, it is considered important to maintain a strong countryside gap between the major urban area of Southampton, and of West End and the Bishopstoke / Fair Oak / Horton Heath area. If either option D or E were selected it is considered that a new countryside gap designation may be needed in the remaining area. An initial view on both options is as follows.
59. If option D were selected a countryside gap with Southampton / West End could be formed to the south, with strong boundaries on both edges (the railway and motorway). If SGO E were selected a countryside gap could be formed with Bishopstoke / Fair Oak to the north, with a strong boundary on just one edge (the railway). This potential gap is already being encroached upon by the permitted expansion of Horton Heath to the west. This also means that if option E were selected, it would result in a continuous or virtually continuous band of development (and in any case urban influence) from Southampton city centre to northern Horton Heath (and with a small gap) to northern Fair Oak, a distance of up to approximately 11 kilometres.
60. Therefore the initial view is that SGO E would perform the least well in terms of the ability to create the strong countryside gap which would be needed in order to form a strong separation between the major urban area of Southampton / West End / SGO E and the communities to the north. It should be stressed that any current or future decision between selecting SGOs D or E would depend on a wide range of other planning factors as well. In terms of all the SGOs (B/C, D and E) the appropriateness of this approach to gaps will be discussed and considered further.

Landscape Sensitivity

61. None of the SGOs are in areas nationally or locally designated for their landscape value, although the eastern boundary of SGO B/C lies within approximately 1 kilometre of the South Downs National Park. The Council has prepared a Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal, an initial relatively 'high level' assessment considered appropriate for comparing the relative merits of different locations in overall terms. Each area is classed as having either high, moderate or low sensitivity to change. High sensitivity land tends to be higher ground visible in longer views, or from footpaths, punctuated by woodland, with parkland, topographical variations and / or a relatively rural / remote location. Low sensitivity land tends to not have these features and rather have some urbanising influences (such as adjacent urban areas, power lines, transport infrastructure, or large scale agricultural buildings).
62. The initial view is that each SGO has areas of high sensitivity. The areas initially considered as such are described as follows. In SGO B/C the most extensive area is within B as it drops down to the Itchen Valley, set against woodland, with no urban influences and visible from footpaths. Parts of C are on higher ground set against woodland, parkland trees or display a

Parliamentary field system. Land in the north east is close to and visible from a footpath just within the South Downs National Park (although this land is excluded from the recommended policy area within which development could occur). SGO D has three parcels of wet or oak woodland. SGO E has higher undulating land forming a setting to Winslowe House, woodland copses, is visible in long views and from footpaths and is relatively remote. An additional copse is potentially overlooked by higher ground. The table below sets out the percentage and total area of each SGO initially considered to be in each classification:

Landscape sensitivity to change:	SGO B/C	SGO D	SGO E
High	23% (75 ha)	4% (6 ha)	19% (35 ha)
Moderate	43% (140 ha)	18% (27 ha)	54% (103 ha)
Low	35% (115 ha)	77% (114 ha)	27% (51 ha)
Total	100% (330 ha)	100% (147 ha)	100% (189 ha)

63. The Council's study initially recommends from a landscape perspective that areas with high sensitivity to change are not developed or else developed with particular sensitivity (for example with large plots and significant tree planting). This will be tested further through the master planning process. Option B/C delivers more development and covers a wider area so will in itself impact on a greater total area of countryside. A Local Plan based on SGOs D or E would need development in other areas of countryside as well and it is initially considered this is likely to be in part of option C.
64. The Table illustrates that the majority of all SGOs are considered to have moderate or low sensitivity to change. SGO B/C has a slightly higher percentage of high sensitivity land than SGO E, and significantly higher than SGO D. SGO E has a lower percentage of land classed as low sensitivity than SGO B/C, and significantly lower than SGO D. The Table illustrates that SGO B/C has a significantly higher total area of high sensitivity land, more than double SGO E and much more still than SGO D. It should be noted that SGOs D and E would need more development elsewhere in the countryside and the initial view is this could be in part of SGO C. This could slightly close the gap between total areas described above.
65. Overall the initial view is that SGOs B and C would have more impact on landscapes classed as having high sensitivity to change, and that SGO D would have the least impact, whilst noting that none of these landscapes are protected by policy.
66. The Council has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of national parks, including when considering development which might impact on the

setting of a park. This includes conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of parks (whilst also recognising the need to foster the social and economic wellbeing of their communities). With respect to the South Downs National Park, in addition to the local view from the footpath described above, consideration needs to be given to whether there could be long views to SGO B/C from high ground within the Park. The South Downs National Park Authority has identified 'view sheds' from key points, and the nearest is 7km away. Eastleigh officers consider any views of the development will appear very remote in this context. They will continue to discuss this point with the National Park Authority if needed.

Biodiversity

67. The following sections primarily identify where the SGOs might affect designations, and a preliminary view if possible as to which might have more potential for an adverse impact before any mitigation measures are put in place. Further work is underway and officers will analyse the results of evidence as it comes in, engaging with relevant statutory and other organisations, to ensure that mitigation can be put in place where needed to avoid an adverse impact which would conflict with policy.

Internationally Important Designations

68. The River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC)²⁷, Solent Maritime (SAC) and Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA)²⁸ are protected under European and national law. Plans, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, must (subject only to considerations of overriding public interest) avoid adverse effects on the integrity of these sites. Mitigation measures can be incorporated into plans to achieve this. If an adverse effect cannot be ruled out, the Plan can only proceed if there are no alternative solutions and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for it to do so. The NPPF explains at paragraph 119 that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined. An initial habitat regulations assessment (HRA) was prepared for the Issues and Options paper. Further assessment is currently underway to ensure that the nature of any adverse effects are fully understood, to ascertain whether such effects can be mitigated, and to ensure that the Plan is supported and informed by a robust and thorough appropriate assessment.
69. Disturbance. The main development areas of SGOs D and E are closer to the River Itchen SAC so may generate more recreational disturbance, noting that at peak times the Itchen Valley Country Park is already heavily used and activity may be displaced elsewhere. In strategic terms these SGOs are also

²⁷ in brief, designated for example for the southern damselfly, otters, salmon and other fish.

²⁸ in brief, designated for over wintering birds and various aquatic species

closer to the Solent SAC / SPA regarding recreational disturbance²⁹. All SGOs may generate disturbance from lights, for example on fish. (In the case of B/C this could be if more street lights were placed on the existing or new parts of the link road). These issues will need to be fully considered in taking a definitive decision on the Plan, and avoidance and mitigation measures incorporated as necessary.

70. Water Services. All SGOs may, through additional water abstraction and waste water, have an impact on the water quality of the River Itchen and/or Solent SACs / SPA. PUSH are currently working with Natural England and the Environment Agency on an Integrated Water Management Strategy to address these issues. It is worth noting that the Environment Agency operate a licence system for these issues to protect the environment, and that the water companies have both a statutory duty to supply and treat water and an established financial mechanism to invest in upgrades. Nevertheless these issues will also need to be fully considered in taking a definitive decision on the Plan, and avoidance and mitigation measures incorporated as necessary.
71. Hydrology. Watercourses flow through or adjacent to the SGOs into the River Itchen SAC (and in one case the Solent SAC / SPA). They all start at headwaters, which are more environmentally sensitive as this is where the 'life of the river' starts. The headwaters and watercourses are important for the water quality of, and movement of species such as otters related to, the SAC / SPAs. SGO B/C contains significantly more headwaters, all SGOs contain or are adjacent to watercourses, and B/C's link road crosses them. Overall in itself SGO B/C may generate more impact. Again, these issues will need to be fully considered in taking a definitive decision on the Plan, and avoidance and mitigation measures incorporated as necessary. It should be noted that a Local Plan based on SGO options D or E is likely to need further housing development, which may be in part of option C. This may also have the potential for impact on headwaters, which may reduce the difference between SGOs to some extent.
72. Southern Damselfly: Development in the Borough, and in combination with development beyond, is likely to lead to more traffic crossing the River Itchen SAC on existing roads (the M27, Bishopstoke Road and/or Highbridge Road as part of the new link road). This may reduce air quality which may impact on populations of the southern damselfly. For all SGOs, the extent of any impacts and any variability between different SGOs or different choices on other parts of the Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, needs to be considered further. Additional work is currently underway, following which any impacts on southern damselfly must be carefully considered, and avoidance and mitigation measures incorporated as necessary, before any definitive decision is taken on the Plan.

Nationally Important Designations

²⁹ It should be noted that PUSH and Natural England are working towards agreeing a definitive strategic approach to mitigate this issue.

73. The NPPF aims to minimise the impact on and where possible achieve a net gain in biodiversity, recognising the relative importance of different internationally, nationally and locally designated sites and the ecological networks between them, preserve priority habitats, allocate the land of least environmental value where consistent with other policies of the NPPF, avoid significant harm (by locating development on less harmful sites) or adequately mitigate that harm, incorporate biodiversity in and around development, and refuse development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland unless the need for or benefit of development in that location clearly outweighs the loss.
74. Woodland. Each SGO is close to at least some woodland, all of which is protected as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and priority habitat. None of the SGOs need involve the loss of protected woodland. It is also important to ensure that any development nearby does not affect either the woodland itself or the habitat and species it supports (such as otter, badgers, bats, and butter flies). SGO B/C is adjacent to 5 ancient woodlands³⁰ classed by national policy as irreplaceable habitat, and which host a range of (priority) species. They also benefit from interconnected habitat (e.g. hedgerows) which cross through the potential SGO area. SGOs D and E are adjacent to 2 or 5 generally less extensive wet woodlands. Within Hampshire these are rarer than ancient woodlands and need supporting wet conditions. Overall the initial view is that SGOs B/C may in itself have more potential for an impact. It should be noted that a Local Plan based on SGO options D or E is likely to need further housing development, which may be in part of option C. This may also have the potential for impact on some woodland, which may reduce the difference between SGOs to some extent.
75. Great Crested Newt (GCN). SGO D is close to the most significant GCN population. A small part of SGO B/C is close to such a population and a part of SGO E is within 500 metres of such a population. The initial view is that SGO D may have more potential for impact.

Biodiversity: Mitigation

76. Any of the SGOs will need to ensure that, with mitigation measures as necessary, they do not have an adverse impact on an internationally or nationally important habitat designation which would conflict with law or policy. Further work is underway to assess this. Assessments cover for example, surveys of species, transport / air quality modelling (for the southern damselfly), and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. Examples of possible mitigation measures, depending on the issue, include non-developed natural buffers (e.g. around woodlands, hedgerows, headwaters, watercourses), the careful design of bridges, interlocking trees or small tunnels to maintain habitat networks across roads, visitor management plans,

³⁰ 400+ year old trees or continuous woodland habitat. There is also a 6th woodland associated with the SGO, adjacent to the Allbrook Hill site, which is understood to be a maternity roost for bats.

lighting controls, etc. Further work is also underway to assess mitigation measures in respect of the southern damselfly. These assessments will be completed and discussed before an overall definitive recommendation is made on the 'pre-submission' Local Plan.

Other Environmental Criteria

77. SGOs B/C and D are classed as having relatively low agricultural land value as are parts of SGO E. However parts of SGO E are classed as higher (grade II) value. The other environmental criteria³¹ relate to issues which, for this scale of development, can be addressed by design / layout (for example to retain undeveloped buffers adjacent to the M27 motorway [to minimise the effects of noise or air pollution] or the setting of listed buildings) or phasing (for example, archaeology).
78. None of the SGO development areas are in zones at higher risk of flooding. SGO B/C is generally on higher land and so needs to be designed carefully to avoid increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. This is likely to include incorporating undeveloped areas and sustainable drainage within and around the development. A part of the SGO B/C link road (mainly the existing High bridge Road) is within an area of higher flood risk, adjacent to the River Itchen. A hydrology study has been commissioned to identify further the measures needed.

SGOs: Summary

79. The following is an initial summary, concluding with an initial recommendation for selecting an SGO, which will be carefully reviewed in the light of further evidence and engagement .
80. National policy promotes walking, cycling, the use of public transport and a reduction in car use, and explains development should be supported unless traffic congestion is severe. Option E is closer to Southampton but this is initially considered unlikely to have a major impact on travel distances given the wide range of destinations people travel to. Options D and E might have the potential for a form of rail access in the long term and this is considered very uncertain. Option B/C benefits from better existing bus services. It is also considerably larger and therefore it is considered likely that it could support more local facilities and bus services, and therefore reduce longer distance and car trips. A Local Plan delivering the scale of development required is likely to add to traffic congestion somewhere whichever SGO is chosen. Unlike options D or E, option B/C proposes to create a completely new road route. This is likely to lead to more effective traffic management on the overall network. The likely deliverability of these options is discussed below. Analysis of the transport model will enable these initial conclusions to

³¹ areas affected by air quality or noise pollution; contamination; minerals; public open space; heritage; archaeology; pylons / pipelines.

be tested and further refined. At this initial stage it is considered that options B/C are better in transport terms.

81. South Hampshire and existing Council policy emphasise the importance of countryside gaps to maintain the separation and distinct identity of towns and villages. None of the SGOs are currently in a countryside gap and each is of a scale that the consequent need for gaps should be considered. It is considered that options B/C enable the creation of a countryside gap with Colden Common consistent with the scale of each community and between each new community. It is considered that if options D or E were selected a strong gap would be needed within the remaining area between the major urban area of Southampton / West End and Bishopstoke / Fair Oak. Taking account of development already permitted in parts of option D and the strength of gap boundaries, it is initially considered that option E would be better preserved as a gap³². Therefore it is initially considered that options B/C or D are better in terms of protecting the future countryside gaps needed.
82. National policy seeks the protection of valued landscapes, commensurate with their national or local designation. The Council has analysed whether the SGO landscapes have a high, medium or low sensitivity to change. A slightly higher percentage and significantly higher total of SGO B/C's area is considered to be of high sensitivity, relative to SGO E. SGO D has the least high sensitivity land. It should be noted that none of the SGOs are designated for their landscape value and the majority of all of them are classed as having moderate or low sensitivity to change. However the initial conclusion is that in themselves, SGO D and then E have less potential for impact on landscapes. A Local Plan based on these SGOs is likely to need development in part of option C which could affect some additional high sensitivity areas. This reduces their benefits to some extent, although the most extensive high sensitivity area in option B would remain undeveloped. Options D and then E are still considered to have less overall potential for impact than SGOs B/C.
83. The law and policy promote the careful protection and enhancement of biodiversity designations, commensurate with their international, national or local designations. None of the SGOs would involve the direct loss of a designated area. Each are close to various designations, and to varying degrees contain ecological networks important to those designations. At this initial stage it is considered that in themselves the SGOs which might have the potential for more impacts are as follows.
 - (a) International designations: Recreational disturbance: D/E; hydrology: B/C. (It is too early to provide an initial assessment of the relative merits of SGOs with regard to the Southern Damselfly).
 - (b) National designations: Woodland / related networks: B/C; Great Crested Newts: D.

³² Recognising that any overall choice between D and E would need to take into account a wide range of other planning factors.

84. It is important to note that a Local Plan based on D or E may also lead to development in part of C so would also have the potential for some further impact on water quality or woodland. Further assessments are underway to more fully understand the extent of potential impacts and effectiveness of mitigation measures. This will enable full conclusions to be drawn (in Local Plan terms) in respect of the law and policy.
85. Finally, Option E has some higher quality agricultural land. Options B/C need to be designed to avoid increasing the risk of flooding.

SGOs: Initial Conclusions

86. It is initially considered that SGOs B/C and D will do most to protect the countryside gaps needed (an important local policy); and furthermore that SGO B/C will do most to benefit transport / accessibility (an important national and local policy). None of the SGOs affect nationally or locally designated landscapes. SGOs B/C will have most impact on non designated landscapes with higher sensitivity to change, although it should be noted that the majority of its land is still classed as having moderate or low sensitivity to change. A Local Plan based on D or E is likely to have some landscape impact within option C too. It is too early to reach initial conclusions on biodiversity incorporating the effectiveness of mitigation.
87. On balance the initial recommendation is to note that SGO B/C is emerging as the currently preferred option. Members should consider two important points before supporting this recommendation.
- i. First, this recommendation prioritises transport/accessibility aims and the protection of countryside gaps, over protecting undesignated areas of higher landscape sensitivity. It is considered that national and/or local policy gives some emphasis to transport/accessibility aims and designated countryside gaps, and less so to undesignated landscapes. The relative weight to be given to completely different issues also has an element of subjectivity to it, and therefore it is important that the elected Council makes this initial decision once members have carefully considered their views on these issues based on the current evidence.
 - ii. Second, all of these issues need further testing through further evidence and/or engagement. Biodiversity is protected by law and policy and is one of the key areas where further testing / engagement is needed.

SGO Policy

88. The wide range of discussions to date have helped to prepare an emerging policy for the initially recommended SGO B/C and associated link road. Appendix 2 sets out an initial SGO policy area. The policy boundary is

intended to represent the maximum possible limit for development³³ but the area within it would not all be developed, as it would also incorporate green spaces. A wider area for green infrastructure is also envisaged, and the Council would like to discuss this further with Winchester City Council and others. The draft policies and boundary have not been shared outside Eastleigh Borough Council prior to the publication of this report. Further evidence and engagement with all interest parties may lead to changes to both.

89. The following is a very brief summary of the emerging policies, and Members should refer to the Emerging Local Plan (Appendix 1) Strategic Policies S5 and S6 (pages 36 to 44) for more detail. The development will be designed and planned comprehensively to create a high quality place and the timely provision of infrastructure. Two distinct communities will be created, separated by a countryside gap between both them and two of the ancient woodlands. The density of development will vary according to the sensitivity of the landscapes / countryside gaps, proximity to existing residential areas, and the proximity to facilities and public transport. The new (and existing) communities will be served by a new district centre (e.g. supermarket and shops) and local centre, a secondary and primary schools, an expanded health facility³⁴, space for more jobs, and a range of open spaces to meet sporting and recreational needs, enhance ecology, manage flood risk and create attractive routes. The building aggregates needed for the construction of the SGO might be extracted as part of the construction process if appropriate. Statutory utilities will be provided, and the potential for low carbon energy explored. No development will proceed until there is sufficient confidence the link road will be delivered as a through route. The development and link road will be designed to ensure nearby habitats (e.g. the River Itchen and ancient woodlands) are protected in line with the law and policy; and that there is no increase in flood risk. Measures will be taken to improve the approach to Allbrook rail bridge.

SGO Delivery

90. Major development on the scale envisaged in the SGOs is not delivered quickly. The rate of delivery depends on putting in the necessary infrastructure and the rate at which developers can build and sell new homes. It is initially considered that SGOs D (1,700 homes) or E (2,500 homes) could be fully delivered within the plan period (to 2036); and that SGOs B/C would deliver the most homes (3,350 new homes) in that period. The remainder of SGO B/C would be delivered beyond 2036. A more detailed trajectory for the delivery of new homes in the SGO and Borough as a whole is set out in Appendices 5 and 7. All these assumptions will be tested and discussed further with the development industry.

³³ Other than the link road which would extend beyond

³⁴ Either within the SGO or expanding existing facilities

91. The following are initially considered to be the key delivery issues for SGOs B and C.

Development and Infrastructure Viability

92. These issues are interrelated because the level of development which can be achieved within the SGO policy area influences how much infrastructure the developer can pay for whilst maintaining a viable development.

Level of Development

93. It is currently considered this will primarily be influenced by two factors. First the appropriate amount of 'green' undeveloped space within the SGO to meet the needs of the community, protect biodiversity, and avoid an increase in flood risk. This will include open spaces, green links, green buffers around ancient woodlands and headwaters, and areas for sustainable drainage. Second the appropriate densities to create a vibrant community, a high quality of design, put more people within reach of services and public transport, protect the amenity of existing residents and ensure development in the more sensitive landscapes and at the new countryside boundary is carefully managed. The developer's very initial master plan³⁵ indicated the SGO could accommodate 6,000 dwellings. Council officers' very initial considerations, based on all the above factors, is that it might accommodate 5,200 dwellings. (Both also include employment, retail and other development). The intention is that the Council will work with specialist consultants on a broad draft masterplan, engaging with local communities and interest parties, to carefully test and refine the potential level of development.

Infrastructure costs and funding

94. Any development has relatively standard building, infrastructure and other planning costs, including for example internal roads, local highway improvements, appropriate contributions to education, local play spaces, and to affordable homes³⁶. SGO B/C potentially delivers significant additional infrastructure benefits which will therefore incur additional costs. It is considered that the main additional costs will relate to the link road and school provision.
95. The full link road³⁷, based on the current design, is estimated to cost approximately £40 million. The further environmental studies may lead to a design which adds to the baseline costs. This may or may not lead to an increase in the £40 million figure, which includes a high level of contingency.

³⁵ published by the Council in December 2016

³⁶ the recommended Plan's target continues to be 35% subject to viability.

³⁷ from Allbrook Hill to Crowdhill and extended on a pro-rata assumption of costs to Mortimers Lane to total £40 million.

96. With regard to schools, the Council continues to engage with Hampshire County Council (as education authority) to understand the likely cost of school provision and the potential mix of developer and public funding.
97. Clearly the SGO is a major development and is likely to be able to pay for a significant scale of infrastructure. The Council has commissioned a high level viability study to provide further understanding of whether or not the development is likely to be able to fund all the infrastructure. The NPPF seeks Councils to consider the overall costs and mix of contributions sought to ensure the development is viable, and aims for there to be a reasonable prospect that long term development and infrastructure can be delivered. It is considered this could include part funding from public bodies if necessary. There are a range of potential funding sources from Government and other public agencies which may assist if needed.

Other Issues

98. The other delivery issues for SGO B/C may have some but potentially significantly less bearing on cost but are issues to be resolved in their own terms.
99. The route of the link road is understood to be primarily within the control of the developers, who are actively managing this process. A part of the road route crosses outside of the Borough, and officers will continue to work actively with Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council.
100. The SGO and link road will need to establish there is no adverse impact on the southern damselfly, incorporating any mitigation measures needed.
101. The link road passes through the Allbrook rail bridge as a two carriageway road. It is understood that cars can pass each other, that larger vehicles can traverse with care and attention, and that two larger vehicles would find it difficult to pass each other at the same time. It is understood that this can cause bridge strikes (on average 2 a year) which causes delays to the rail network. The general care and attention needed for larger vehicles can also, along with incidents of surface level flooding, cause road traffic congestion. There may be measures which can manage or improve the situation which could be financed by the SGO³⁸. An assessment of these and the transport model results, in dialogue with Hampshire County Council and Network Rail, will improve the understanding of the net effects. These organisations provided comments based on an earlier pattern of development, and these appear at the end of Appendix 8.

SGOs D and E

102. Developers are not actively promoting option D. Option E as currently proposed is considered to deliver less infrastructure than options B/C. In that sense it may raise fewer delivery issues to resolve and does not depend on a

³⁸ e.g. warning signs, road realignment to improve site lines

new link road being delivered but may deliver fewer benefits and might place more pressure on existing infrastructure. It should also be noted that SGOs D or E would also need to ensure they did not adversely affect the southern damselfly, and would also be affected by a constrained rail bridge on Allington Lane. It is understood that this bridge does not enable two cars to pass each other, so in that sense it is more constrained and could become a more congested 'pinch point' with development. These issues need to be further considered and discussed with the developers and others.

103. In any case when a final recommendation on an SGO is made, there needs to be a reasonable prospect that it can be delivered in the timescales envisaged.

Other Sites: Housing

104. The following process has been used to make an initial recommendation of which other sites could be allocated to meet the overall need for new homes. Again, this enables all interested parties to review and comment on the evidence, to enable Council officers to refine or change the initial recommendations as needed.
105. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) includes all 214 sites identified by developers, landowners or planning offices, and undertakes a consistent baseline assessment of them against all relevant planning criteria. Site promoters have been able to comment on the factual accuracy of the assessment of their own site. Council officers' initial view is that a significant number of these sites do not need further assessment because the principle can readily be established that they either can be developed (they have planning permission³⁹, or are urban sites), or cannot be developed (the site is covered by an ecological designation); or because there is currently no reasonable prospect that they can be delivered. The remaining sites were, where adjacent to each other, merged to create 41 larger sites.
106. An initial comparative assessment of these 41 sites has been undertaken against the NPPF criteria as set out in paragraph 37. Council officers have completed this initial assessment and will present it in a form which can be published. A sustainability appraisal of the 41 sites has been completed and published. A map showing the location of the 41 sites and a summary of the assessment results is set out in Appendix 9. The overall scores are 'added up' on an equal weighting other than that 'other environmental' criteria are given a half weighting. This is because these criteria do not primarily relate to issues of locational principle and can generally be addressed through good design⁴⁰.

³⁹ or a Council resolution

⁴⁰ The exception is agricultural land quality. Any sites in higher flood risk zones are 'screened out' in the development capacity work. The issues that can be addressed through design / layout or phasing are: zones affected by poor air quality / noise; contamination; minerals; public open space; heritage; archaeology; pylons / pipelines.

107. The initial view is that the protection of countryside gaps should be prioritised and therefore sites which scored 'poor' in these terms should be ruled out from development. A number of reasons are advanced at this stage for this approach, and the Council will welcome further views on these:
- (a) The Borough contains a lot of towns and villages in a relatively small area often with relatively narrow gaps separating them from each other or the adjoining major urban area of Southampton.
 - (b) The protection of these gaps to maintain the separate identity of towns and villages is a long established policy across South Hampshire, most recently re-emphasised by the PUSH Spatial Position Statement.
 - (c) The public response to this Council's Issues and Options paper highlights the importance residents place on protecting countryside gaps.
 - (d) Countryside gap designations are effective because there is a direct relationship between the aim (preventing the coalescence of settlements) and the mechanism (avoiding development in the gap).
 - (e) Protecting biodiversity is considered equally as important and sites have already been ruled out on these grounds.
 - (f) In terms of transport / accessibility the initial view is that the difference between 'good' and 'poor' green field sites is relatively subtle, as none are adjacent to major centres or transport hubs, so are considered unlikely to result in significant differences in the use of cars, public transport, cycling or walking. Furthermore, it is possible that the underlying transport aims (reducing congestion / pollution, increasing access) may be achieved in a variety of non-planning ways. In other words the relationship between the policy aim and mechanism is relatively weak, compared to that for countryside gaps.
 - (g) None of the sites are designated for their landscape qualities, and the initial view is that none of the recommended sites score 'poor' in these terms.
 - (h) Sites have not been scored 'poor' in countryside gap terms simply because they are currently in a designated gap. 6 sites are in the currently designated gap but it is considered they can be developed without eroding the purpose of the gap and so are allocated. In other words a 'blanket ban' has not been placed on development in gaps.
 - (i) Finally 'poor' countryside gap sites have not been 'ruled out' at an early stage, but have been included in the comparative assessment so that the implications of excluding them can be understood.
108. This process has led to a recommendation on sites that officers initially consider enables the Council to fully meet the need for new homes set out in the PUSH Spatial Position Statement.

109. Ultimately the relative weight to be attached to completely different issues (i.e. transport, gaps, landscape) is a subjective decision which should be taken by the elected Council. Council Members should also be mindful that following the report of further engagement, they may or may not wish to reach a different decision on sites for the final 'pre submission' Local Plan.
110. The sites which pass this stage are then put through an initial assessment of their potential development capacity, based on site specific issues (such as trees of value, listed buildings, and road access). In 5 cases the initial view is that these issues mean the site cannot be sensibly developed. In 1 case (Blundells Lane) it is uncertain whether or not the site can be appropriately developed. The Plan identifies this site as a special policy area setting out the issues which would need to be addressed, without a presumption in favour of development (particularly given the potential international habitat issues). Given the uncertainties the evidence does not 'count' the site as part of the supply of housing or other development. In all other cases the initial assessment suggests no site specific reason why the site cannot be allocated for housing led development and simply suggests a refinement of the SLAA's very early assessment of how many dwellings can appropriately be accommodated. The Emerging Local Plan includes policies to guide the development of these sites based on this assessment. The initial recommendation is therefore to propose that these 16 sites, which can accommodate 1,704 dwellings, are allocated for development.
111. Once the full initial assessment is published this will enable any interested party to make comments, enabling officers to consider whether or not their initial recommendations are 'sound'.
112. A final internal check for consistency has identified that a small number of other relatively small sites may have been ruled out at too early a stage, or that circumstance have changed since the assessment commenced. Officers have no further view on these sites at present and will assess them prior to their final recommendation on the Plan.

Other Development

Retail and Leisure

113. The Council's assessment considers there is a need across the Borough by 2036 for 2,345 sq. m of food store, 18,564 sq. m of comparison (non-food), eating / drinking, gym, multi-use family and cultural space. Officers consider most of this is likely to be accommodated in centres (including the proposed centre in the SGO); and that any remaining need should be assessed against the NPPF criteria of retail impact and 'centres first' (the sequential approach).

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

114. The Council has completed an assessment of the need for gypsy and traveller pitches and plots to 2036 in line with Government guidance. On this basis there is a need for 4 to 5 permanent gypsy and traveller pitches. The initial recommendation is to identify 4 existing currently unauthorised pitches (see

Appendix 11). They are initially considered to be in suitable locations in principle and are deliverable. There is no identified need for a transit pitch and this should be kept under review. There is a need for at least 3 to 5 plots for travelling show people. At least 3 plots of this need relates to families on unauthorised plots elsewhere who have expressed a desire to locate in the Borough. Given the uncertainties in some cases regarding the nature of the need, and particularly the deliverability of any other sites, in addition to identifying the 4 pitches the Plan includes a positive policy to consider potentially suitable sites as they are acquired and proposed.

Countryside Gaps

115. Cabinet initially approved the approach for countryside gaps on 15 June 2017. That report is summarised and updated as follows, with further detail in Appendix 10. Again these are initial recommendations and further views will be considered. Countryside gaps are a long established part of planning policy in South Hampshire and have strong community support. A review of the gaps has been undertaken, drawing on comments from the '2029 plan' Inspector and PUSH criteria. Gap designations should focus only on those areas needed to protect the physical / visual separation and character of settlements at risk of coalescence, have clear boundaries, and not prevent development needs being met.
116. The review concludes there is a strong need for countryside gaps, and that a single tier of designation⁴¹ would be the most effective. In very broad terms it retains existing gaps but does reduce the total area covered by them, generally where land has already been developed or is not needed to maintain an effective gap. Where this is still undeveloped land it remains protected by countryside and often other environmental designations.
117. Since the 15 June Cabinet the following have been incorporated. First, the assessment of 'Other Sites' set out above. 6 of the sites are currently within the gap but are considered not to be fundamental to its purpose, so are recommended for development. On this basis they should be removed from the gap. The initial recommendation for the SGO also leads to the need for new gaps (with Colden Common and between the new communities). It is possible that a further review may be needed to understand whether or not with very careful design parts of 'Other Sites' ruled out on gap grounds could be included; and whether the 'Other Sites' recommended for allocation increase the risk of coalescence and the need for additional gaps.

Adjustment of Urban Edges

118. The urban edge will be adjusted to include allocated sites, and sites adjacent to the current urban area which already have planning permission.

Development Management Policies

⁴¹ Previous plans included 'strategic' and 'local' gaps.

119. Following the strategic policies is a suite of more detailed development management policies which set out the matters the Council expects applicants for planning permission to address in their development proposals. They address such matters as design, layout flooding, sustainability, energy and water efficiency, space standards, pollution, utilities, nature conservation and so on as well as providing more detail on some of the strategic policies identified above on development in the countryside, traffic and parking, protection of existing employment sites, retail development, affordable housing, gypsies and travellers and the provision of recreation, open space and community facilities.

Policies for Each Local Area and Parish

120. Appendix 13 sets out the main development sites by each Local Area or Parish.

Financial Implications

121. Funds have been set aside in an earmarked reserve for the revenue costs of the Plan. This reserve will be closely monitored throughout the year to ensure that should the situation arise that any revenue growth is required this will be identified as early as possible.

Risk Assessment

122. It is considered the Council is continuing to pursue a process to enable it to demonstrate progress in preparing a robust plan which will enable it in due course to submit a Local Plan it considers to be sound. It is considered this, together with the Council's continued approach to permit appropriate planning applications under the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, will demonstrate a positive approach to planning for sustainable development and reduce the risk that developers will be successful at appeal regarding sites the Council considers unsuitable.

Equality and Diversity Implications

123. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report. The emerging Eastleigh Local Plan has an important role in setting the framework for future development within the Borough. It will have an impact on those who live and work in the Borough regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender or other equality group. No adverse impacts have been identified for any particular group.
124. There are policies within the emerging Local Plan which will have positive impacts on some groups. The implementation of the Plan would help to reduce adverse impacts on the community which could result from failing to address its needs for development. No adverse impacts on equality groups have been identified in the emerging Local Plan.

Conclusion

125. The Emerging Local Plan is based on a need to provide new homes, jobs and associated infrastructure, create attractive communities within which to live and work which include other facilities and green spaces, whilst also carefully protecting the environment, all in accordance with the NPPF and environmental law.
126. It is considered the emerging Local Plan will demonstrate the Council is planning positively for the new homes needed, in a Strategic Growth Option and a range of smaller sites.
127. The Council will submit for independent public examination a Local Plan that it considers to be 'sound'. A range of evidence has been published to enable further testing and engagement; and further evidence is being collected. Therefore at this stage the recommendation is to approve an emerging Local Plan, which gives an initial direction of travel to facilitate this further testing and engagement. The recommended emerging Local Plan sets out a requirement for new homes and employment floor space, a major new community (Strategic Growth Option), a range of other development sites, countryside gaps, and other policies to guide development as set out in the recommendations and the main body of the report.
128. Once the testing and engagement on the emerging plan, current and further evidence is complete the Council will make a decision on a 'pre-submission' Local Plan. At that stage any interested party will have the opportunity to make written representations regarding that Plan. The 'soundness' of the Local Plan is then considered at the examination and if it is found 'sound' by the independent planning inspector the Council can then proceed to adoption, provided it incorporates any 'main modifications' recommended by the Inspector. The Emerging Local Plan is therefore part of a robust ongoing process to consider the future development plans for the Borough.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

See Appendix 12: List of Evidence