

CABINET

15th JUNE 2017

COUNTRYSIDE GAPS REVIEW

(EASTLEIGH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW)

Report of the Senior Specialist (Local Plan)

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Approves the countryside gap designations set out in the Appendix;
- (2) Agrees that the revised countryside gap designations are adopted as a material consideration for planning officers and Local Area Committees in determining planning applications with immediate effect;
- (3) Recommends to Council that the countryside gap designations specified above are incorporated in the 'proposed submission' Local Plan for public consultation

And used by Council planning officers as evidence at planning inquiries on inappropriate sites within the proposed countryside gaps to demonstrate that the Council has a strategic approach to gaps and is committed to delivering housing in appropriate locations.

And notes the preliminary work undertaken, taking into account the gaps review, on small / medium greenfield site selection methodology for the Local Plan.

Summary

The Local Plan will identify housing sites to meet the overall target for new homes and to ensure a choice and continuity of housing delivery. It is important to review the need for countryside gaps between settlements alongside this work.

An assessment of countryside gaps has been completed, informed by previous consultation responses, informal discussions with Councillors, recent permissions and sites under construction and the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA). Following this assessment council staff are in a position to recommend which countryside gaps should continue to be protected. This will inform imminent planning appeals and strengthen its justification for refusing planning permission on inappropriate sites.

The countryside gaps review will inform the selection of sites to deliver the housing target in the Local Plan and is subject to change to reflect these site allocations. Preliminary work undertaken on site selection demonstrates that, taking into account revised countryside gaps, there is a potential contribution from small and medium greenfield sites subject to further assessment.

Statutory Powers

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Localism Act 2011.

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

Introduction

1. The Borough contains a significant number of urban settlements within a small overall geographical area. The countryside gaps between settlements are therefore already relatively small or very narrow. They are important features in protecting the distinct identity of individual towns and villages and preventing urban sprawl. They also ensure more people have access to and / or sight of countryside in their local area.
2. The countryside gap policies are long established in South Hampshire and the principle of designating them is maintained in the PUSH Position Statement. The public consultation on the last Local Plan 'Issues and Options' paper shows that they continue to be highly valued. The only way to achieve the policy aim of preventing the coalescence of settlements is to avoid putting development in the countryside gap between those settlements. There is a clear, direct and exclusive relationship between the policy mechanism and policy aim. In short countryside gap policies are important and effective way to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

Countryside gaps appraisal

3. Council officers have undertaken a thorough review of countryside gaps in the Borough. This follows in part from comments made by the Inspector who considered the Local Plan (2011 – 2029) that the countryside gaps evidence needed to be strengthened. The countryside gaps review is part of the evidence base for the revised Local Plan and will be published as a background paper.
4. The review draws from PUSH criteria for designating gaps. Designations should be those needed to protect the sense of physical and visual separation between, and individual character of, settlements at risk of coalescence. The land included in the gap designation should be open in nature, and no more than is needed to meet these aims. The gaps should not preclude the ability to plan for the scale of development needed across the Borough.
5. The review has been informed by an appraisal of the landscape and of each gap taking into account the above factors, and in addition whether the gap has clearly defined boundaries (with a strong urban edge), and the settlements which are separated have a distinctive character and urban form. The review also takes into account the strong community support for countryside gaps (expressed during the Issues and Options consultation in December 2015); recent planning history; and the approach in adjoining districts.
6. The review concludes that there continues to be a strong need for countryside gaps given the nature of the Borough, which contains a significant number of settlements located close to each other. The review considers that a single

countryside gap designation would be the clearest and most effective policy approach. It therefore proposes replacing the current two tier strategic and local countryside gap designations as set out in the adopted Local Plan with this single designation.

7. The review broadly proposes that the existing countryside gap designations are retained. However it does propose adjustments which will reduce the area covered by countryside gaps (these include taking out land which has been developed or has permission for new development). This is considered appropriate to ensure that only the land necessary to maintain the separation between settlements is designated. It therefore strengthens the justification for the remaining countryside gaps without undermining their purpose.
8. The specific changes to countryside gaps are set out in the table and map in the Appendix.
9. The countryside gaps review provides evidence for imminent appeals and for any future decisions on planning applications to which gap policies are relevant. It is also recommended that the countryside gaps as proposed are incorporated into the Local Plan (subject to change to reflect greenfield site allocations). The decision on gaps does not pre-empt decisions on the allocation of greenfield sites for housing.

Greenfield site selection

10. The countryside gap review is part of the evidence in the site selection process for the Local Plan. Site selection is a key part of preparing a Local Plan as it demonstrates why certain sites are allocated for development or not. It forms part of the Local Plan evidence base and justification for the approach taken. The site selection process will demonstrate that the Council is taking a positive approach in undertaking a comprehensive assessment of all suitable sites in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
11. Preliminary work is ongoing to assess sites on the basis of countryside gaps and also of transport and accessibility, landscape sensitivity, biodiversity and other environmental criteria. This work indicates that a considerable number of smaller greenfield sites may have the potential to be allocated as suitable sites for residential development and contribute towards meeting the local plan housing target.
12. This is preliminary work only and the sites will also be subject to Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Transport Modelling. These need to be completed before final decisions are made on whether the sites can be allocated for development in the Local Plan.

Financial Implications

13. There are no costs arising as a direct implication of the recommendations within this report. Any further future costs of the plan will be funded from the Local Plan revenue reserve.

Risk Assessment

14. Reviewing the designation of countryside gaps as part of the wider Local Plan process and in light of the need to fully meet the 5 year housing land supply requirement and overall housing needs of the Borough, shows that the Council is planning positively for development. This supports the 'soundness' of the Local Plan and reduces the risk that developers will win planning permission 'on appeal' for sites that the Council considers are inappropriate for development.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report. The emerging Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2036 has an important role in setting the framework for future development within the borough of Eastleigh. 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.
16. 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 appraisal and revision of countryside gaps.

Conclusion

17. The Council has reviewed the need for countryside gaps as part of the Local Plan process, to provide a robust justification for these important designations whilst planning for the development needed. The countryside gap designations will be incorporated into the 'proposed submission' Local Plan (subject to any changes as a result of further detailed work on site allocations) to be considered at Cabinet and Council.

GRAHAM TUCK
SENIOR SPECIALIST (LOCAL PLAN)

Date: 15 June 2017
Contact Officer: Graham Tuck
Tel No: 023 8068 3842
e-mail: graham.tuck@eastleigh.gov.uk
Appendices Attached: 2
*Report No

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.

Appendix I - Proposed Changes to Gap Designation

The assessment of sites has been conducted following a review of the existing Countryside Gap policy. This review has resulted in a number of revisions to current Gap boundaries. The recommended revisions to the Gap boundaries are detailed in the table below:

Map ID	Recommended Boundary Changes to Adopted Local Plan Gaps	Comment
Southampton and Eastleigh		
1.	Exclude Approved Development land south of Chestnut Avenue, Eastleigh	Strategic development location EI in the 2014 submitted Local Plan and need to take into account further urbanisation of land west of the M27.
2.	Exclude small areas south of South Street	Areas which are now associated with the South Street development
3.	Add and adjust small area at northern end of runway.	To better follow ground features
4.	Exclude new development and parking between the railway line and Wide Lane	No longer contributes to the visual and physical separation of Southampton and Eastleigh
Southampton – Hedge End/ Bursledon /Netley		
5.	Extend to include land between Bubb Lane and Burnetts Lane adjoining crematorium	To take account of the proximity of existing development on Moorgreen Road in West End to existing development in Grange Park, Hedge End
6.	Exclude Berrywood Business Village	Existing development on the road side off Bubb Lane accessed off Tollbar Way makes no contribution to the gap
7.	Exclude built development at Ageas Bowl	Existing development makes no contribution to the gap
8.	Exclude Kings Community Church on Upper Northam Road	Large building makes no contribution to the gap
9.	Exclude small area north east of Moorgreen Hospital	Area forms part of a proposed redevelopment site

Map ID	Recommended Boundary Changes to Adopted Local Plan Gaps	Comment
10.	Exclude areas at St Johns Road/Foord Road	Land has consent for housing development (location HE2 in the 2014 submitted Local Plan)
11.	Exclude area west of Hamble Lane	This includes land for housing development opposite Jurd Way granted on appeal and associated sites north and south
12.	Exclude area at Abbey Fruit Farm, Grange Road Netley	Land with resolution to permit for housing and employment,(development site HOI in the 2014 submitted Local Plan)
13.	Exclude pub and associated buildings on Grange Road	Existing development makes no contribution to gap
14.	Exclude existing houses south west of Grange Farm	Existing ribbon development off Grange Road adjoining Netley Abbey makes no contribution to gap
Eastleigh – Bishopstoke		
15.	Exclude Land associated with the former Mount hospital site	New development east of Church Road (location BiI in the 2014 submitted Local Plan)
16.	Exclude Breach Sling Copse and Stoke Common Copse	Not necessary to the function of the gap
Boyatt Wood- Otterbourne Hill and Allbrook		
17.	Exclude land at Porchester Rise/Boyatt Lane and land now in allotment use	Development site with consent (location ALI in the 2014 submitted Local Plan) the land now used for allotments is not necessary to the function of the gap
18.	Exclude Boyatt Road boundary north of Allbrook Way	Not necessary to the function of the gap
19.	Exclude undeveloped land between Allbrook Knoll and Portchester Rise	Not necessary to the function of the gap
20.	Exclude narrow strip of land north of Boyatt Wood	Not necessary to the function of the gap
Hedge End - Horton Heath		

Map ID	Recommended Boundary Changes to Adopted Local Plan Gaps	Comment
21.	Exclude area between Horton Heath and Blind Lane	This is land with consent for development (location WE1 in the 2014 submitted Local Plan)
Botley – Boorley Green		
29.	Exclude Maddoxford Lane	This includes land with outline consent for development (Land at Crows Nest Lane and Maddoxford Lane)
Hedge End – Botley		
22.	Exclude ribbon development north of Holmesland Lane (numbers 2-18)	Existing development, not necessary to the function of the gap
23.	Exclude land NW of Woodhouse Lane south of Bottom Copse	Existing residential and recreational uses, not necessary to the function of the gap
24.	Exclude Land east of Sovereign Drive	Includes development granted at appeal, together with adjoining recreation ground and woodland which is not necessary to the function of the gap
25.	Exclude land east of Brook Lane	Land east of Brook Lane forms a clear boundary that is not necessary to the function of the gap (includes some conservation area)
Hedge End – Bursledon		
26 & 27.	Exclude land north of Pylands lane and south of the M27	This includes land with consent for development (location BU3 in the 2014 submitted Local Plan) together with woodland and fields which are not necessary to the function of the gap
28.	Exclude land south of M27	Land with consent for development (BU1 and BU2 in the submitted 2011-2029 Local Plan)
30.	Exclude land either side of Hound Way, Netley	Not necessary to the function of the gap between the main settlements
31.	Exclude saltmarsh between Lincegrove Marsh and Land's End Road	Not necessary to the function of a gap, use railway line, river and creeks as boundaries

Map ID	Recommended Boundary Changes to Adopted Local Plan Gaps	Comment
	Fair Oak – Horton Heath	
32.	Exclude Whitetree Close and Knowle Park	Part existing housing development , part Knowle Park, not necessary to the function of a gap
33.	Exclude land south of Quobleigh Pond	This forms part of the site with a resolution to permit west of Horton Heath (WEI in the submitted 2011-2029 Local Plan)