

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report brings the production of an updated Urban Capacity Study (UCS) to the attention of Members and seeks their approval for the results of the study to be considered as part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Development Framework. A copy of the UCS has been circulated to all Members.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The UCS is an update of a previous UCS prepared for the Council in 2000. This revised and updated UCS builds upon information in the previous study and uses empirical evidence and analysis of historical trends to make revised projections.
- 2.2 As the updated UCS was completed, revised guidance on undertaking Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This guidance supersedes previous advice and suggests that urban capacity studies be replaced with new Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. The relationship between the Council's UCS and DCLG guidance is examined in Appendix 1 to this report.

3 ISSUES AND OPTIONS RAISED

- 3.1 The UCS examines a variety of potential sources of residential development in the District. A constrained capacity for the differing sources has been determined and, in cases involving specific sites, the probability of the site coming forward has been estimated.
- 3.2 The UCS does not state a single figure for the urban capacity of the district – instead it lists projected capacities having regard to a number of differing potential scenarios. The realisation of the various scenarios will be dependent on a number of factors including the market and human behaviour, but also on the future planning policies of the Council.
- 3.3 It is considered that scenario K is the most realistic assessment of the urban capacity for the district and, subject to Members' comments, it is proposed that this figure is used to calculate the requirement for the release of green field sites for housing development in the emerging development plan documents.
- 3.4 With regard to the analysis in Appendix 1, whilst it is disappointing that a detailed piece of work to comprehensively review and update the UCS has, in part, been almost immediately superseded by the publication of new guidance, it is nevertheless concluded that the UCS is a robust analysis that

can be used to realistically assess the capacity of the urban areas of the district to accommodate more housing development. As explained in Appendix 1, further work will be undertaken to align the analysis with the new DCLG methodology.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Failure to have an up-to-date evidence base in place for the Local Development Plan may lead to future Development Plan Documents being found unsound by the Planning Inspectorate.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to have an up-to-date evidence base in place may lead to Development Plan Documents being found unsound by the Planning Inspectorate and the Council failing to comply with the timetable laid out in the Local Development Scheme. This will affect the award of Planning Delivery Grant and would require the reproduction of the relevant Development Plan Documents.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

- (1) That the Urban Capacity Study 2007 be adopted as part of the evidence base for the production of the Council's Local Development Framework.
- (2) That scenario K be adopted as the most realistic assessment on which to base calculations for green field housing requirements.
- (3) That further work be undertaken to align the UCS with the new Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment methodology.

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Background Papers:-

None.

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