
URBAN CAPACITY STUDY - UPDATE (Min 109/01)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on the publication of the full version of the Urban Capacity Study, following the issue of an Executive Summary.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An Urban Capacity Study for the District was completed earlier in the year and reported to the Planning Policy Sub-Committee on 1st March 2001. (Minute 106)
- 2.2 In deliberating on the results of the Study and the implications for the Local Plan, Members were concerned about the outcomes of releasing the information for public scrutiny at too early a stage in the Plan making process. As a compromise, an Executive Summary was prepared and circulated to all agents, landowners, etc., who had previously made representations to the Planning Authority for development sites to be included in the Plan.
- 2.3 To date, there has not been extensive feedback on the contents of the Executive Summary, but comments that have been received have been universally negative and to the effect that it is not acceptable for the Authority to maintain confidentiality on a report that is crucial to the likelihood or otherwise of sites being included in the Plan.
- 2.4 Whilst the Executive Summary explains that it is likely that there will be no allocations of Green Belt land for future housing provision to 2011, insufficient detail is provided to adequately assess the implications of this conclusion.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 There is no doubt that for some agents and landowners, the Executive Summary has clarified the Council's likely position on Local Plan allocations. However, for others the information provided to date has not enabled them to fully explore the implications.
- 3.2 It can certainly be argued that the details of the Study should remain confidential for the moment and be published at the same time as the First Deposit Draft of the Local Plan.
- 3.3 However, the Urban Capacity Study is, at this stage, no more than an information document that will be used to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. On that basis, publication of the full report does not commit the Authority to any particular Housing Strategy.

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- 3.4 There is little doubt that at whatever stage it is published, the Study will be closely scrutinised. Early publication would allow agents to test the robustness of the Study findings, but until the Authority takes a decision on housing policy, any such issues would be of limited value.
- 3.5 On the other hand, early publication could provide some useful feedback that would help inform the preparation of the Plan.

4 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Sub-Committee considers whether it is appropriate to publish the full details of the Urban Capacity Study, or whether publication should await the issue of the First Deposit Draft of the Replacement Local Plan and **RECOMMENDS** accordingly. (HPS)

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