

CABINET

12 October 2005

SOUTH EAST PLAN: "WHERE SHALL WE LIVE" CONSULTATION

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB1104 - South East Plan Update, Cabinet 29 June 2005

CAB1047 - Consultation on South East Plan, Cabinet 23 March 2005, Council 13 April 2005

CAB1096 - South East Plan: District Housing Distribution, Cabinet 26 July 2005.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The draft South East Plan was published in January 2005 for a first stage of public consultation, relating to the overall strategy and housing provision. A second stage of public consultation, including District-level housing requirements was originally planned for July 2005. The arrangements for this were changed and the 'Part 2' consultation started on 5th September. The consultation is being undertaken by Hampshire County Council and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and runs until 21st October.

Winchester District falls partly within the South Hampshire sub-regional area, where the strategy promoted by PUSH is of economically-led growth. In this part of the District the housing provisions proposed are substantial, whereas they are more modest for the rest of the District, which falls within the 'residual' part of the County which is not promoted as a growth area (known as Central Hampshire & New Forest).

The "Where Shall We Live" consultation provides an opportunity for the City Council to respond to the housing distributions proposed and the alternative options set out in the consultation documents. This report summarises the options as they affect the City Council's area and recommends that comments be agreed by Cabinet on behalf of the City Council.

In relation to Central Hampshire & New Forest it is recommended that the City Council supports 'Option 5' (greenfield development requirements distributed amongst the various local authorities) rather than any of the other Options, which would concentrate greenfield development in only one or two locations (e.g. Barton Farm).

For South Hampshire, there are a number of significant issues for the City Council, including concerns about the scale and location of the proposed Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), and the potential scale of some options for distributing greenfield 'urban extensions'. These are all based on the assumption that there would be an additional 3,000 dwellings located to the north of Whiteley, and between 2,000 and 5,200 additional dwellings at West of Waterlooville (over and above the originally-planned 2,000 but including the 1,000 'reserve'). It is recommended that the upper end of this range is unacceptable and should be resisted. Further details are included within the report.

Because of the deadline for comments of 21st October, any comments that the City Council wishes to make must be submitted following Cabinet, although this would be subject to endorsement by full Council on 2nd November.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Cabinet:

That the recommended comments set out in the bullet points at paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4 of this report be endorsed and submitted to the strategic planning authorities as holding comments, representing the City Council's response to the "Where Shall We Live" consultation.

To Council:

That the comments of Cabinet be endorsed as representing the City Council's response to the "Where Shall We Live" consultation.

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SOUTH EAST PLAN: "WHERE SHALL WE LIVE" CONSULTATION

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The draft South East Plan was published by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) for consultation in January 2005. That publication was the start of the 'Part 1' consultation on the general policies and strategy of the South East Plan. It was intended that there would be a further consultation on District-level housing requirements in July 2005, prior to submission of the Plan to Government in November 2005.
- 1.2 This programme proved unrealistic and SEERA has 'commissioned' the 'principal authorities' (in Hampshire these are Hampshire County Council and Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils) to produce and consult on the District-level distribution of housing requirements, in consultation with Districts. Groupings of local authority officers and Members have been established to steer this process. For Winchester, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and the Central Hampshire & New Forest local authority grouping are relevant, and the City Council plays an active role in both.
- 1.3 Following the 'Part 1' consultation on the overall development strategy and general housing requirements, SEERA decided on the housing requirements for each sub-region and remaining 'rest of County' area at its Plenary Meeting in Winchester on 13 July 2005. Following this, Part 1 of the Plan was finalised and formally submitted to Government. The 'principal authorities' have been required to develop District-level housing distributions ('Part 2' of the Plan) to deliver the overall sub-regional/County totals, in consultation with the Districts.

2 The Consultation Process and Documents

- 2.1 Work on the District-level housing options was finalised over the summer and consultation started on 5th September. Hampshire County Council and PUSH have jointly produced a 14-page stakeholder consultation document entitled "Where Shall We Live", which has been distributed to District and Parish Councils, statutory undertakers and other organisations. Hampshire County Council has also produced a special edition of its residents' magazine 'Hampshire Now' and distributed this to all households in the County. This summarises the options for each sub-area of the County and asks the same questions as the full 'Where Shall We Live' document. Similar publications have been produced for the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth.
- 2.2 The City Council has held a series of meetings for the public, parish councils, etc during September/October, as follows:
- 21st September Bishops Waltham, Jubilee Hall
 - 22nd September Winchester, Guildhall

- 28th September Whiteley, Meadowside Centre
- 29th September Denmead, Memorial Hall
- 4th October Knowle, Knowle Village Hall

An update on the meetings will be provided at Cabinet.

2.3 Part 1 of the South East Plan has established the boundaries of the sub-areas of the County and the levels of housing to be provided annually in each. These requirements are set for the purposes of this consultation and the strategic planning authorities' task is to devise a District-level distribution which will produce the required level of housing in each sub-area. The requirements are:

- South Hampshire (PUSH sub-region) - 4,000 dwellings per annum;
- Northern Hampshire (part of Western Corridor sub-region) - 1,300 dwellings per annum;
- Central Hampshire & New Forest ('residual' Hampshire area between PUSH and Western Corridor) - 800 dwellings per annum.

The total required provision for Hampshire is 6,100 dwellings per annum over the 20-year period of the Plan (2006 – 2026).

2.4 This report considers the implications of the various options for Winchester District. It only considers the housing distribution proposals for the PUSH and Central Hampshire areas as none of the District falls within or adjoins the North Hampshire sub-area. Because there is a firm deadline for comments on the consultation of 21st October, it is not possible for this matter to be considered by full Council. Therefore it is recommended that Cabinet agree 'provisional' comments on behalf of the City Council, to be submitted by the 21st October deadline, with full Council in November formally endorsing comments on behalf of the City Council.

2.5 The following sections consider the options that are included in the consultation for South Hampshire and Central Hampshire & New Forest, in particular the implications for Winchester District.

3 South Hampshire Sub-Region (PUSH)

3.1 The South East Plan identifies a number of sub-regions which will generally be a focus for growth. These include South Hampshire, and the PUSH grouping of authorities has been carrying out work to refine its recommended strategy which had been included at Section E1 of the draft South East Plan. PUSH had promoted a preferred level of housing of 79,000-82,000 dwellings over the Plan period and the range of figures in the South East Plan Part 1 was 56,000-80,000 dwellings. PUSH submitted a joint comment on the draft South East Plan at the consultation stage which promoted the 'sharper focus' option in relation to growth provision for South Hampshire (see CAB1104, Appendix 1).

3.2 Considerable work has been done by PUSH authorities on the need for housing, including affordable housing, to support its aspiration to increase economic performance on the sub-region to match that of the South East as a whole. This work suggests that the level of housing required is closely linked to assumptions about economic activity. The conclusion is that provision of 80,000 dwellings over the Plan period (averaging 4,000 per annum) is needed

and this recommendation was accepted by SEERA at its Plenary Meeting on 13 July.

- 3.3 Although the current consultation exercise is about the distribution of the housing requirement, not the overall level, there are concerns that the economic growth strategy that is proposed is poorly related to the needs of the area. A more focussed strategy should be investigated to meet the needs of those areas which are suffering economic deprivation, and taking account of the different needs of the greenfield 'fringes' of the PUSH area which are relatively prosperous. It should give consideration to opportunities for developing the skills of local residents to allow them to take jobs in new industries rather than relying in bringing in new workers. Furthermore, the projections on which the estimates of economic growth and housing need are based have been questioned in some quarters, are heavily based on previous trends, and are very susceptible to small changes in the assumptions used.
- 3.4 The District-level consultation deals with an overall requirement of 4,000 dwellings per annum. It highlights the general strategy of developing existing commitments, urban capacity and some new 'urban extension' sites in the first half of the Plan period (generally to 2016), at which point Strategic Development Areas would start to provide housing in large numbers, to the end of the Plan period and possibly beyond.
- 3.5 The proposed distribution of housing is made up of a number of components:
- 11,000 dwellings on sites already identified for housing;
 - 38,000 on other previously developed land within settlements;
 - 19,000 within Strategic Development Areas (SDAs);
 - 12,500 on greenfield 'urban extensions'

It should be noted that these figures are approximate (and actually total slightly more than 80,000).

- 3.6 For South Hampshire the consultation questionnaire invites comments on the overall level of development proposed on previously developed sites (38,000), the SDAs proposed north of Fareham and north/north east of Hedge End, and the 3 options proposed for accommodating 12,500 dwellings through urban extensions.
- 3.7 A summary of these proposals and options, concentrating particularly on the implications for Winchester District, is set out below.

Existing Sites/Previously Developed Land

- 3.8 The figures of 11,000 on existing sites includes, in Winchester District, the 'baseline' provision of 2,000 dwellings at West of Waterlooville, as well as other smaller commitments (e.g. Whiteley). The estimate of 38,000 from previously developed land includes an estimate of 'urban capacity' in the southern part of Winchester District. As the existing sites are already committed, and the estimate of urban capacity is modest, it is not considered that there are any significant issues arising for Winchester District.
- 3.9 However, the level of greenfield that is required depends directly on how much of the overall requirement can be accommodated in urban areas - the more capacity can be provided in Southampton, Portsmouth and the other

main urban areas, the less greenfield development will be needed. As brownfield development is promoted by Government policy, along with a 'sequential approach' to allocating sites, PUSH should be encouraged to maximise the use of brownfield land and to incorporate policies which will ensure its use in preference to greenfield sites. Estimates of brownfield site capacity have previously been as high as 55,000 and the aim should be to increase brownfield capacity to, or beyond, this level.

Strategic Development Areas

- 3.10 Two Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) are proposed, one of 10,000 dwellings in Fareham Borough, to the north of the M27 and the other in Eastleigh Borough, to the north or north-east of Hedge End. Because of their location, both of these have the potential to extend into Winchester City Council's area, and will certainly impact on it. The aim is that these would be large, potentially self-contained, sustainable settlements, linked to the main urban areas (Southampton and Portsmouth) by high quality public transport.

SDA in Fareham Borough North of M27

- 3.11 The proposed SDA in Fareham Borough is described as being 'north of the M27 motorway'. The consultation document indicates that, while the precise location of the SDA is still under consideration, a 'clear gap' would be maintained with Wickham. The document indicates that if this SDA is not built there would be a need for extensions to various towns within Fareham, Gosport and Havant Boroughs.
- 3.12 In principle, the PUSH strategy of accommodating large amounts of the required growth in a limited number of SDAs could be a sustainable solution. Development of this scale may facilitate the provision of major infrastructure, and this would be needed to accommodate the development, particularly in terms of transport. For example, it is likely that Junction 10 of the M27 would need upgrading to an 'all-moves' junction from its currently restricted layout. Also, large-scale development may facilitate the development of a station on the Fareham-Eastleigh railway line, at Knowle or nearby. There is also the potential to extend South Hampshire Rapid Transport (SHRT) to serve the development, assuming of course that the initial phase of SHRT can be developed.
- 3.13 However, there are substantial concerns about the proposed SDA north of Fareham. A major concern is the potential land-take of such a development and the extent to which it may intrude into the generally open and undeveloped landscape north of the M27. This is a very exposed landscape, with rising land north of the M27 which would make any development prominent in the landscape.
- 3.14 The land-take required to accommodate an SDA of 10,000 dwellings and associated employment, shops, schools, community facilities, etc is very considerable. As a rough guide, the 2,000 baseline dwellings and associated facilities proposed at West of Waterlooville require over 100 hectares and the area for the Winchester City North MDA (which does not include substantial employment) is almost 90 hectares. These MDAs are planned at an average density of about 40 dwellings per hectare. Therefore, on the basis of experience with the MDAs in Winchester District, a development of 10,000 dwellings could use about 500 hectares of land.

- 3.15 Such a development would use a large part of the land within Fareham Borough bounded by the M27, Funtley, and the Fareham Borough boundary (this area totals approximately 880 hectares). Given that this area is generally elevated and exposed, especially the northern and eastern parts, and may be subject to a range of constraints, it is unlikely that this scale of development could be satisfactorily accommodated. Indeed, the eastern part of the area extends almost to Fort Nelson, and clearly forms part of Portsdown Hill.
- 3.16 It seems almost inevitable that development of this scale would merge with Knowle and whilst this may indeed be advantageous if it facilitated the re-provision of a rail station either at Knowle or nearby, on the Fareham-Eastleigh rail line, residents are likely to object if the settlement loses its identity. However, as the land rises to Hoads Hill in a northwards direction and Portsdown Hill to the east, it is unlikely that development could acceptably extend right to the edges of Fareham Borough, a point emphasised by the need to retain an undeveloped gap with Wickham.
- 3.17 It is, therefore, concluded that there is no justification for development to extend into Winchester District, save that we will wish to consider carefully whether there is a case for a link with Knowle. The direct impact on the District in terms of incursion of development may, therefore, be limited, but there will inevitably be visual, traffic, and other impacts from large-scale development in this location. A particular concern is likely to be the traffic impact on the A32/B2177 corridor, especially if local traffic is discouraged from using the M27.
- 3.18 Accordingly, in the absence of a strategic environmental assessment, it is difficult to judge whether this SDA would be more sustainable than extensions to the larger settlements in Fareham, Gosport and Havant. It is clear from the above that there are substantial concerns, and a more appropriate solution may be to develop a smaller SDA (the size to be determined following further environmental and visual appraisal work) with the shortfall made up from smaller scale urban extensions to settlements in Fareham, Gosport and Havant Boroughs. It is, therefore, recommended that the City Council highlights the substantial concerns and constraints to accommodating this scale of development, and points out that a smaller scale of development, in conjunction with urban extensions to settlements south of the M27, appears a more sustainable option.

SDA in Eastleigh Borough North of Hedge End

- 3.19 The proposed SDA in Eastleigh Borough is described as being to the 'north and north east of Hedge End'. Like the Fareham SDA, the precise location of the Eastleigh SDA is still under consideration, although the consultation document suggests that it may extend into Winchester District. The document indicates that if this SDA is not built there would be a need for extensions to various towns within Eastleigh and probably Test Valley, Southampton and New Forest.
- 3.20 As with the Fareham SDA, the strategy of accommodating large amounts of the required growth in a limited number of SDAs appears in principle to be a sustainable solution. Development of this scale may facilitate the provision of major infrastructure, which would be needed to accommodate the development, particularly in terms of transport. For example, there is the

potential to make use of the recently-developed Hedge End Station, but it will be important to investigate whether good rail links into Southampton can be provided. There may also be potential to develop a new arm of South Hampshire Rapid Transport (SHRT) to serve the development. If not, major improvements to achieve road-based access may be necessary.

- 3.21 However, the major concerns for the City Council are likely to be the land-take and transport implications. The logical location for such development would be for it to be centred on Hedge End Station, adjoining the northern edge of Hedge End and contained by the B3354, Winchester Road. However, it does not seem possible to accommodate the scale of development envisaged, even if development wraps around all of the northern edges of Hedge End, and some coalescence with Botley, Boorley Green, Horton Heath or West End (or all of them) would seem inevitable to achieve this level of development.
- 3.22 If development is not centred on Hedge End Station (and it is understood that Eastleigh Borough Council may be seeking a gap between Hedge End and the SDA), it would need to extend further to the north, north east or north west. It is not clear why development to the north west of Hedge End is not mentioned as an option and it is recommended that the City Council should press for this to be included.
- 3.23 Depending on the disposition of development, part of the SDA may need to be accommodated in Winchester District. As such a location would be relatively isolated from facilities and transport links, this is unlikely to be a sustainable solution. Although there may be scope for some more sustainable development in the Botley Station area, this would be very close to any northern extension of Whiteley and be separated from the SDA by Botley village.
- 3.24 With certain dispositions of development, the scale of the SDA proposed could involve substantial levels of development in Winchester District, possibly leading to coalescence with Durley or Curdrige. Development in these locations would be increasingly remote from the major urban areas it is intended to serve and the means of access (possibly via Whiteley Way and M27 Junction 9 and the Fareham/Eastleigh rail line) would mean that the development is more closely related to Portsmouth rather than Southampton. This would duplicate the purpose of the Fareham SDA and leave Southampton without a dedicated SDA.
- 3.25 A key issue will be how to provide an SDA which is well related to Southampton and meets its needs, so as not to distort the provision of development towards the Portsmouth end of the PUSH area. Also, access to Southampton, either by rail or road, should be one of the main determinants of the location and form of development. These considerations suggest that the proposed SDA needs to be further to the west as its currently-planned location would cause it to overlap with provision being made for Portsmouth at Fareham SDA and, to an extent, north of Whiteley. It may be necessary to reduce the size of the SDA to achieve this and to avoid coalescence with villages to the east of Hedge End, particularly those within Winchester District.
- 3.26 As with the Fareham SDA, the pressures generated by traffic seeking to head northwards is likely to put considerable pressures on rural roads in Winchester District, especially the B3354 corridor. Eastbound traffic may also

merge with that from the Fareham SDA to put further pressure on the A334/A32/B2177 routes. This is another reason to seek to ensure that the SDA is better related to Southampton.

- 3.27 Accordingly, in the absence of a strategic environmental assessment, it is difficult to judge whether this SDA would be more sustainable than extensions to the larger settlements in Eastleigh, Test Valley, Southampton and New Forest. There are certainly substantial concerns which warrant either the location or scale of the SDA being re-examined. It is, therefore, recommended that the City Council highlights the substantial concerns and constraints to accommodating this scale of development, whilst indicating that any SDA should adjoin Hedge End but be located and accessed so as to be able to serve Southampton, rather than overlapping with provision that is aimed at Portsmouth. This may necessitate a smaller sized SDA.

Urban Extensions

- 3.28 A further aspect of the consultation in relation to South Hampshire is the range of options for accommodating the 'urban extension' element of about 12,500 dwellings. A large proportion of these are proposed in Winchester District and, to a lesser extent, Test Valley Borough as these are the largest 'greenfield' Districts within the area. There are 3 options, which for Winchester District propose a range of housing from 5,000 additional dwellings to 8,200 additional dwellings. These would be in addition to the 2,900 dwellings which are already committed, many as part of the West of Waterlooville 'baseline' MDA.
- 3.29 It is understood that the makeup of the range of dwelling figures and assumptions behind them are as follows. Under all the options 3,000 dwellings are assumed to be a northern extension of Whiteley and 1,000 comprise the 'reserve' element of the West of Waterlooville MDA. The remaining units (ranging from 1,000 under Option 1 to 4,200 under Option 3) relate to the further expansion of West of Waterlooville, beyond the baseline and reserve provision already allocated. It is unlikely that the South East Plan would include this level of detail, so the City Council would have some flexibility on how it accommodated the overall numbers.
- 3.30 The original Whiteley Local Plan referred to the scope for further development to the north of the settlement and this would help to make the existing town centre more central to the development. It would also be an opportunity to complete Whiteley Way and to provide some of the facilities which are not currently provided, such as completion of Whiteley Way and further schools. Development to the north east of Whiteley is constrained by woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Although there are some Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the area to the north, these are not so extensive as to prevent development of the scale envisaged. The area generally between the B3051 and the Eastleigh-Fareham railway line would, therefore, seem capable of accommodating about 3,000 dwellings.
- 3.31 The West of Waterlooville 'reserve' provision is already planned for and the proposed location has recently been supported by the Local Plan Inspector. The various options envisage either extending the MDA generally within the constraints that exist around the site (Option 1, reserve + 1,000 dwellings) or breaching these significant constraints, which would allow substantial further development (Options 2 and 3, reserve + 3,000–4,200 dwellings).

- 3.32 Much work has been done on the constraints to development at West of Waterlooville in planning the current MDA. In general terms, the major constraint to further development are the large areas of ecologically-important woodland to the west of the development, although there is also Portsdown Hill to the south and the Denmead Gap to the north-west. Other areas to the north and east are already built-up.
- 3.33 It is thought that the Option 1 figure of about 2,000 dwellings (including the current MDA reserve) could be accommodated within these major constraints, subject to further analysis. However, both Options 2 and 3, for much higher levels of development, would not only require these constraints to be compromised, but would also result in a development which would be poorly related to any existing urban centre and difficult to access. For example, breaching the woodland to the west of the MDA and extending development in that direction would result in the development being about 3km from Waterlooville town centre, with no other urban centre of any size nearby. Also, because of the constraint posed by Portsdown Hill and the narrow rural lanes to the west, the only realistic point of major access is the A3. This is some 2km to the east and would already have to accommodate traffic from the existing built-up areas and MDA.
- 3.34 In view of these issues, it is recommended that the City Council strongly opposes Options 2 and 3 in the consultation document. These would require a scale of further development at West of Waterlooville which is unrealistic and unsustainable due to its poor relationship and accessibility to existing urban areas within the sub-region. It would also involve serious loss of environmentally and ecologically important parts of the Forest of Bere, which at the moment form one of the most valuable and complete parts of this landscape.
- 3.35 There are no other locations within the southern part of Winchester District which could alternatively accommodate this scale of development, other than those which have already been identified. Indeed, with the potential incursion of development from the Fareham and Eastleigh SDAs, it is possible that the housing provision figures for Winchester could end up significantly higher than those in the consultation document. It is understood that the figures in the consultation document relating to Winchester do not include any allowance for any SDA 'overspill'. In any event, as there is only limited, if any, scope for such incursions these would not justify the levels of development proposed in Options 2 and 3.

4 Central Hampshire and New Forest Area

- 4.1 The Central Hampshire and New Forest area is not a sub-region and therefore not a focus for growth. The local authorities agreed a joint response to the draft South East Plan which promoted the 'sharper focus' option, with a suggested level of housing provision of 1000 dwellings per annum. This was submitted to SEERA in April 2005 and the authorities have continued to work together on producing a District-level housing distribution. However, SEERA has now decided that the housing requirement for the Central Hampshire and New Forest area should be 800 dwellings per annum (16,000 from 2006-2026).
- 4.2 It is believed that the figure of 800 was chosen mainly in order to limit the overall Hampshire total rather than because of any specific disagreement with

the authorities' suggestion of 1,000. Nevertheless, regardless of the merits of the 800 dwellings p.a. figure, this is now the subject of the public consultation on District distribution.

- 4.3 The Central Hampshire authorities estimate that about 700 dwellings p.a. (14,000 total) can be provided by way of commitments and 'urban capacity', leaving about 100 p.a. (2,000 total) to be provided on new greenfield sites. The public consultation puts forward 5 options for distributing this new greenfield provision of 2,000 dwellings, as follows:
1. Winchester (Barton Farm)
 2. Andover
 3. Whitehill/Bordon (MOD land)
 4. Some at Andover and some at Whitehill/Bordon
 5. Shared amongst all in the above and some of the other main settlements in the area.
- 4.4 Options 1 and 5 are the most relevant for the City Council. Option 1 would equate to the release of the Winchester City North (Barton Farm) reserve MDA. With the location and main features of the proposed reserve MDA having recently been supported by the Local Plan Inspector, this is a realistic option, with certain advantages as highlighted in the consultation paper. On the other hand, it would concentrate all the available new greenfield housing for a large part of Hampshire over the next 20 years in one location.
- 4.5 It is understood that Test Valley Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council are positive about some further development at Andover and Whitehill/Bordon respectively. However, either of Options 1-3 would concentrate development in one location and thus deny the possibility to achieve development at both Andover and Whitehill/Bordon. Therefore, whilst there are advantages in concentrating development at Barton Farm, it is considered unlikely that these are greater than the merits of developing at Andover and/or Whitehill/Bordon. Nevertheless, given the limited amount of housing available to be allocated on greenfield sites over a long time period, it is recommended that none of the large-scale allocations in Options 1-3 should be supported.
- 4.6 Option 4 would achieve a slightly better distribution than Options 1-3 but would still concentrate development in only 2 locations. This may limit the scope to provide for the strong housing needs which exist in Winchester, as well as the other Central Hampshire & New Forest Districts. Also, the implications of the Winchester District Local Plan Inquiry Inspectors' Report are that a number of 'local reserve sites' may be identified in the Central Hampshire part of Winchester District (subject to the City Council's deliberations regarding the Inspectors' recommendations).
- 4.7 Two of these 'local reserve sites' on the edge of Winchester and one at New Alresford, totalling over 300 dwellings. If released, these sites could go some way to providing the 600 dwellings proposed for Winchester District under the dispersal option (Option 5). This option would provide some flexibility for limited growth in the main towns and villages, which could assist in easing housing affordability problems. This is especially the case now that revisions to PPG3 allow for sites to be allocated specifically for affordable housing. Whilst options 1-4 may achieve a higher level of affordable housing provision overall, it would be highly concentrated in only 1 or 2 areas.

- 4.8 Accordingly, on the basis that the current consultation concerns only the distribution of 2,000 dwellings on new greenfield sites, it is recommended that Option 5 is the most appropriate. If at some point the overall total which is being sought should be raised this may warrant a strategy which allows for some large-scale concentrated development as well as smaller dispersed sites. However at present it is recommended that a dispersal strategy would best meet housing needs across the Central Hampshire & New Forest area as a whole and take account of the development potential in Winchester District highlighted by the Local Plan Inspectors.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 District-level housing provisions have been developed to accommodate the housing numbers agreed by SEERA and subsequently submitted to Government as Part 1 of the South East Plan. These were published for public consultation in early September. The consultation is being carried out by Hampshire County Council and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), but the City Council has taken an active role in publicising the consultation proposals through a series of public meetings in late September/early October.
- 5.2 The strategy of economically-led growth for South Hampshire results in a high housing requirement of 4,000 dwellings per annum (80,000 total). Of these, the consultation suggests that 2,900 will be provided in Winchester District on existing sites and through urban capacity, with a further range of 5,000-8,200 on new greenfield sites. In addition, 2 new Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) are proposed adjoining the District, one in Fareham Borough and the other in Eastleigh Borough.
- 5.3 It is recommended that the following comments be made on behalf of the City Council in relation to the proposals for the **South Hampshire** area. These generally address the 'Key Questions' identified in the consultation questionnaire.
- The City Council questions the robustness of the economic growth projections and their relationship to the development requirements that arise, as these are highly dependent on certain assumptions, some of which may be questionable. Also, the sectors which the strategy proposes should grow may not achieve the levels of employment expected or the type of jobs sought. There should be more emphasis on resolving the area's economic and deprivation problems by providing appropriate and targeted growth, both sectorally and geographically, to underpin and explain the percentage growth figure across the board. There should be proposals to direct growth and regeneration in the first instance to where it is needed, rather than an emphasis on housing development in greenfield locations. There is a need for an overall delivery agency to drive the economic strategy and deliver employment and other benefits that meet local needs.
 - The level of development on existing identified sites and other urban capacity within South Hampshire's main urban areas should be maximised. A target of at least 55,000 should be set, which would support the 'urban-centred' strategy for the area, result in the most sustainable forms of development and reduce the need for harmful and unsustainable greenfield development.

- Greenfield releases, whether in the proposed SDAs or through urban extensions, should be regulated so as to encourage the use of previously developed land and to reflect monitoring of the strategy's objectives for economic growth. Greenfield housing land should only be released when and where it is needed to support planned economic growth and where monitoring shows that the planned levels of economic growth are being achieved.
- The City Council has major reservations about the North Fareham SDA, particularly in terms of loss of countryside, landscape intrusion and the impact of traffic, especially on the rural routes to the north of the proposed SDA. These are exacerbated by the sheer scale of the proposal, which is unlikely to be accommodated without development extending into prominent areas of countryside, such as the fringes of Portsdown Hill and Hoads Hill.
- While the potential advantages of concentrating development in SDAs are acknowledged, the lack of strategic environmental assessment means that the City Council is unable to agree that the Fareham Borough SDA on the scale proposed is a better option than the alternative of smaller scale developments within Fareham, Gosport and Havant Boroughs. Given the constraints to developing an SDA of the scale proposed, it is suggested that a smaller SDA may be more appropriate (adjoining Fareham, not necessarily all north of the M27), with the balance made up by urban extensions to settlements south of the M27.
- The City Council supports the reference to the need to retain a clear gap with Wickham, both to conserve the separate identity of this historic settlement and due to the landscape intrusion that would arise if development extends too far northwards. Similarly, the separate identity of Knowle should be protected.
- The City Council has major reservations about the Eastleigh Borough SDA, particularly in terms of intrusion into relatively remote countryside, coalescence with existing settlements and the impact of traffic, especially on the rural routes to the north and east of the proposed SDA. The City Council questions the proposed location of the SDA to the north/east of Hedge End and suggests that a location on the north-western side of Hedge End would better serve Southampton and enable improved access into the City. Development to the north/east of Hedge End will be in close proximity to major development also proposed at Fareham SDA and north of Whiteley and would skew the provision of housing towards the Portsmouth end of the PUSH area.
- The City Council's concerns about the Eastleigh SDA are exacerbated by the sheer scale of the proposal, which seems likely to require development that will cause the coalescence of several small settlements and the extension of development into areas which are not easily accessed. It may be necessary to reduce the scale of the SDA to enable it to be accommodated and/or direct it to a more suitable location than currently proposed.
- While the advantages of concentrating development in SDAs are acknowledged, the lack of strategic environmental assessment means that the City Council is unable to agree that the Eastleigh Borough SDA on the scale proposed is a better option than the alternative of smaller scale developments within Eastleigh, Test Valley, Southampton or New Forest Districts. Given the constraints to developing an SDA of the scale and in the location proposed, it is suggested that the SDA should be located to the north-west of Hedge End and, if necessary, should be

smaller, with the balance made up by urban extensions to settlements to the west, well-related to Southampton. If this SDA is shown to be the preferable solution, it should adjoin the existing settlement of Hedge End and not be separated from it by a countryside gap. This would allow full use to be made of Hedge End Station.

- The City Council could accept the number of new homes as urban extensions set out in Option 1 of the consultation. This could be accommodated through an extension of about 3,000 dwellings to the north of Whiteley and 2,000 dwellings at West of Waterlooville (including the reserve provision already identified). The Council agrees with the consultation document that development elsewhere in the District will be modest because of its rural nature and there are no other opportunities for significant development.
- Development at the scales indicated in Option 1 should only take place if adequate infrastructure is provided at the appropriate time, including completion of Whiteley Way and the Waterlooville Southern Access Road, provision of schools within/to serve the development areas, and protection of important nature conservation interests adjoining both areas.
- Options 2 and 3 are unrealistic and the Council would strongly object to these. They would result in excessive development at the Portsmouth end of the PUSH area and inadequate development to serve the needs of Southampton. They also assume a scale of further development at West of Waterlooville that would breach major environmental constraints and involve serious loss of environmentally and ecologically important parts of the Forest of Bere, which at the moment form one of the most valuable and complete parts of this landscape. They would also result in development which is very poorly related to any urban areas and difficult to access, leading to an unsustainable development (which could hardly be called an 'urban extension') and putting considerable traffic strain on the A3 corridor, which is the only realistic way of accessing the area.

5.4 In relation to the proposals for **Central Hampshire**, it is proposed that the following comments be made:

- The City Council prefers Option 5 for Central Hampshire and New Forest on the basis that this best meet housing needs across the area as a whole and could take account of the development potential in Winchester District highlighted by the Local Plan Inspectors. Other Options would concentrate the limited amount of greenfield development in only one or two locations, resulting in a lack of housing provision across large parts of the sub-area. While such concentration may be appropriate if a larger housing provision were being sought, it should not be made at the expense of opportunities to provide housing to meet the needs of a number of the most sustainable settlements in the sub-area.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

6.1 The Council's key priorities for 2005-2008 include 'to provide affordable homes in safe and pleasant environments for all sections of our community'.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 In the longer term the City Council will need to consider how actively it wishes to participate in the Public Examination stage of the South East Plan. The proposed levels of development arising from the South East Plan will in due course need to inform the Council's Local Development Framework, for which appropriate resource provision needs to be made.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

None.