



East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review

Adopted by
East Hampshire District Council
on 30th March 2006

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I am very pleased to introduce the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review. The Plan replaces the First Review and sets out the planning policy framework to guide and control development in the District in the period to 2011.

The publication of this Local Plan is the outcome of a long process which began in 1998. The Plan has been prepared with full public participation at each stage in the process. The local community, town and parish councils, residents, businesses, developers and other organisations have been actively involved in helping to shape East Hampshire's future.

Over the various stages of plan preparation about 9,000 representations were received. There was a high level of support for the overall strategy of the Plan which seeks to achieve sustainable development by meeting the needs of East Hampshire's residents and businesses whilst respecting the character of the natural and built environment.

Over 7,000 objections were received. The Council held a Public Inquiry from April 2003 to May 2004 when all the outstanding objections were considered by an independent Government Inspector. The Council received the Inspector's Report in April 2005. It contained his recommendations on where the Plan should be changed.

The Council considered the Inspector's recommendations and published its Modifications to the Plan for public comment. The Modifications included most of the Inspector's recommendations. The Council took account of the comments made on the Modifications and agreed the final version of the Local Plan which was adopted in March 2006.

The Local Plan Second Review provides a firm basis for the Council to make decisions on planning applications across East Hampshire. I believe that this Plan strikes the right balance between the need to protect the character and quality of our towns, villages and countryside and the need to allow appropriate development to sustain the economy of the District and to meet our housing needs.

However the process of local planning does not end with the adoption of the Local Plan. A new planning system was introduced in 2004 which allows Plans to be "saved" for 3 years from the date of their adoption – in our case to 2009. Each year the Plan will be monitored and reviewed. Once policies are implemented or become out of date, they will be replaced where appropriate through the preparation of Development Plan Documents. The community will be given the opportunity to be fully involved in the preparation of any future documents from the outset.



Councillor Patrick Burridge

**Portfolio Holder for Development and
Chairman of Development Policy Panel**

CHAPTER 1:		page
Planning Background		
Planning for Development and the Environment		11
Reviewing the Plan		11
Planning Context		11
The Purpose of the Local Plan		13
How to Use the Plan		13
The Process and Local Community Involvement		14
Other Related Strategies and Documents		15

CHAPTER 2:		
General Strategy		
Introducing East Hampshire Sustainable Development - Overall Strategy for East Hampshire		19
National Context		19
Map TL1 Transport Links in East Hampshire		20
Regional Context		21
County Structure Plan Review		21
The Themes and Aims of the Plan		22
GS1 Sustainable Development - Keynote Policy		22
GS2 Location of Development		23
GS3 Protecting the Countryside		26
GS4 Making the Most of Existing Infrastructure, Services and Facilities		27

CHAPTER 3:		page
Countryside & Heritage		
Introduction		33
Landscape Protection		33
C1 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty		35
C2 Nature Conservation		36
C3 Nature Conservation		36
C4 Nature Conservation		36
C5 Local Landscape Features		38
C6 Tree Preservation		38
Forestry Operations Management Plans		39
C7 Water Resources		39
C8 Flood Protection		40
C9 River Corridors		41
C10 Protection of Agricultural Land		41
Protection of the Setting of Settlements		41
C11 Gaps Between Settlements		42
C12 Equestrian Uses		43
C13 Rural Diversification		43
C14 Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside		44
New Agricultural and Forestry Buildings		47
HE1 Design		47
HE2 Alterations and Extensions to Buildings		49
HE3 Advertisements		49
Protection of the Historic Heritage		50
Conservation Areas		50
HE4 New Development in a Conservation Area		50
HE5 Alterations to a Building in a Conservation Area		51
HE6 Change of Use of a Building in a Conservation Area		51
HE7 Demolition in a Conservation Area		51
HE8 Development Affecting the Setting of a Conservation Area		51
Listed Buildings		52
HE9 Demolition of a Listed Building		52
HE10 Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building		53
HE11 Change of Use of a Listed Building		54
HE12 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building		55
HE13 Buildings of Local Architectural, Historic or Townscape Interest		55
HE14 Under Utilisation of Historic Buildings		56
HE15 Commercial Frontages		56
HE16 Commercial Frontages		56
HE17 Archaeology and Ancient Monuments		57
HE18 Historic Parks and Gardens		58
HE19 Ancient Tracks and Lanes		58
Environmental Improvements		59

CHAPTER 4:**Transport, Energy and Pollution**

page

	Introduction	63
	Movement and Access Studies	64
	Location of Development	64
	Transport Assessments and Travel Plans	64
T1	General Policy: Land Use and Transport	65
T2	Public Transport Provision and Improvement	65
T3	Pedestrians and Cyclists	66
T4	Pedestrians and Cyclists	67
	Cycling	67
	Walking/Horseriding	67
T5	New Recreational Footpaths	68
T6	Access for People with Impaired Mobility	68
	Highway Improvement, Traffic Management and Safety Schemes	69
T7	Road Schemes	70
T8	A3(T) Hindhead Improvements	70
	A325 Route Strategy (Greatham to Holt Pound)	70
T9	Highway Issues - New Development	70
T10	Highway Issues - New Development	71
	Off-Site Transport Infrastructure	71
	Freight Movements	71
T11	Road User Facilities	71
T12	Parking Standards	72
T13	Car Park Allocations	73
T14	Servicing	73
E1	Conservation of Energy	74
E2	Renewable Energy	75
	Pollution	76
	Safeguarding General Amenity	76
P1	Unpleasant Emissions	76
P2	Unpleasant Emissions	76
P3	Noise Pollution	77
P4	Noise Pollution	77
P5	Light Pollution	77
P6	Privacy and Daylight	78
P7	Contaminated Land	78
	Waste Management	78

CHAPTER 5:**Housing**

page

	Introduction	83
	Overall Amount of Housing	83
	Housing Distribution Strategy	85
H1	Baseline Housing Allocations	86
H2	Reserve Housing Allocations	87
	Development Briefs	99
	Village Design Statements	99
	Developers' Contributions	99
H3	Residential Development Within Settlement Policy Boundaries	100
	Empty Homes Strategy	100
H4	Creating a Mix of Housing Types, Sizes and Tenures	101
H5	Higher Densities of Residential Development	101
	Dwellings Designed for Home Working	102
H6	Loss of Residential Accommodation	102
H7	Subdivision of Dwellings Outside Settlement Policy Boundaries	103
H8	Houses in Multiple Occupation	103
H9	Areas of Special Housing Character	105
H10	Special Housing Areas	106
	Affordable Housing	106
H11	Affordable Housing Within Settlement Policy Boundaries	108
H12	Affordable Housing Outside Settlement Policy Boundaries	109
	The implementation of Affordable Housing	110
	Design of, and Energy Efficiency in Affordable Housing	111
	Non Statutory Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing	111
H13	Accommodation for the Elderly and Rest and Nursing Homes	111
H14	Other Housing Outside Settlement Policy Boundaries	113
H15	Removal of Occupancy Conditions	114
H16	Maintaining a Range of Dwelling Sizes Outside Settlement Policy Boundaries	114
	Mobile Homes	116
H17	Accommodation for Gypsies	116
H18	Travelling Showpeople	117

	page		page
CHAPTER 6:			
Economy			
	121		
	121		
	121		
IB1	122		
	127		
IB2	127		
IB3	128		
IB4	129		
	130		
IB5	130		
IB6	130		
	131		
TC1	131		
TC2	132		
TC3	133		
	133		
S1	134		
	134		
S2	134		
S3	134		
S4	135		
S5	135		
S6	136		
S7	136		
	137		
TM1	138		
TM2	138		
TM3	138		
TM4	139		
TM5	139		
TM6	140		
TM7	140		
	140		
		MOD1	140
			140
		MOD2	141
			141
		Ministry of Defence Sites:	
		Longmoor	142
		Bordon Camp	142
		SCU Leydene	142
		RAF Oakhanger	143
		Minerals	143

	page
CHAPTER 7:	
Health and Community	
	147
	147
HC1	147
HC2	148
HC3	148
	150
CF1	150
	151
PS1	151
PS2	151
LC1	152
	152
RI1	152
CR1	153
	153
	153
UI1	154
UI2	154
UI3	154
	154
UI4	155
	156
R1	156
R2	157
R3	158
R4	160
R5	163
	164

	page
CHAPTER 8:	
Putting the Plan into Effect	
	167
	167
	167
	168

APPENDICES:

Appendix A:	Glossary of Terms	169
Appendix B:	Criteria for Designating SINC's and list of SINC's	176
Appendix C:	The Council's Enforcement Procedures	187

Chapter 1

Planning Background

Chapter one: Planning Background

Planning for Development and the Environment – Planning Background

1.1 One of the main tasks of the District Council is planning for the future use of land. This is achieved through the Local Plan. Land is a limited resource under increasing pressure for many types of use. For example, more land will be used to provide buildings to meet our needs for new homes, jobs, shops, community facilities, and open space.

1.2 The existing stock of homes is not sufficient to meet future needs. This is because the number of individual households will continue to grow even though the population of East Hampshire will not increase rapidly. People are living longer than before and elderly people are staying longer in their own homes. Younger people are leaving their family home earlier, for jobs, education, or greater independence. Many people stay single longer and are living alone rather than with their families. There is a growing rate of marriage break-up which results in an increase in the number of households.

1.3 The Local Plan aims to help create mixed and inclusive communities which offer a choice of housing. It is important to assess the existing housing stock and to secure a suitable mix of dwelling size, type and affordability in new housing development to reflect both the existing and the future needs of each community.

1.4 Land is needed to provide modern buildings for industry, offices and shops if we are to maintain a healthy economy and allow our businesses to compete in the 21st Century. Some local firms may need to expand. If new land is not provided for businesses in the Local Plan, some firms may be forced to move out of East Hampshire. Providing land for businesses closer to where people live could help commuters to reduce their long journeys to work.

1.5 Land and buildings are required to meet the changing needs of the community, for example, playing fields, schools, or health and community centres. These types of development must keep pace with new housing and employment to maintain a balanced community and to improve the quality of life for local people.

1.6 East Hampshire is an extremely attractive area in which to live and work. The task of the Local Plan is to allocate areas for new buildings and other uses of land so that they relate well to each other, and are developed in a way that respects the particular character of the towns, villages and the surrounding countryside.

1.7 It is a difficult task to balance development requirements against the need to conserve our environment. There are no easy solutions. The Local Plan aims to accommodate new development in a way that accords with long term objectives and achieves a sustainable outcome for our communities by minimising its impact on the environment and on the biodiversity of the District.

Reviewing the Plan

1.8 The Council first adopted a Local Plan for the whole District in 1993. A Review of the District Local Plan was adopted in 1998 but the policies only covered the period to 2001.

1.9 A Second Review of the District Local Plan is needed to make sure that the policies and proposals are still up to date. This document has been prepared as a statutory local plan to guide and control development in East Hampshire District until 31st March, 2011.

Planning Context

1.10 The Local Plan is not prepared in isolation. It must apply national, regional and county-wide policies at the local level and show how they can be interpreted and implemented in East Hampshire. This Plan has been prepared under the planning system that was in operation until 2004. Reference is therefore made throughout the document to Government PPGs (Planning Policy Guidance) and to the County Structure Plan. On adoption this Local Plan was incorporated, along with the Structure Plan, into the new planning system. Planning decisions must now take account of national and regional advice, including Government Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Circulars and the Regional Spatial Strategy.

1.11 After the First Deposit Plan was prepared, the Government published PPG3: 'Housing' (March 2000). This aims to promote sustainable patterns of development and to maximise the use of previously developed land, provided that it is suitably located, thereby reducing the need for the development of greenfield land. Local planning authorities are advised to assess the capacity of urban areas (settlements with policy boundaries) so as to accommodate more housing. National planning policy encourages the creation of balanced communities and higher density housing development where sites have good access to local facilities, although it recognises that good design is crucial to creating attractive, high quality living environments. Plans should adopt a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing development. This Plan is revised to take account of these national policies.

1.12 It has also been prepared to conform to the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review (1996 - 2011). The Structure Plan Review is a strategic document for the whole County and sets out policies which will shape the pattern of development and conservation of the environment in Hampshire in the period up to 2011. This adopted Local Plan, the adopted Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review) and the adopted Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan together form the Development Plan for East Hampshire District.

1.13 The County Structure Plan Review was adopted by Hampshire County Council in March 2000. It requires local plans across Hampshire to make provision for 94,290 dwellings in the period April 1996 to March 2011. This is made up of a baseline figure of 80,290 dwellings and a reserve provision of 14,000 dwellings. The reserve housing sites will only be released if there is a compelling need. This will depend on the rate at which housing is being provided across the Structure Plan Area as a

whole particularly on previously developed sites in built up areas and on sites allocated in Local Plans.

1.14 The number of dwellings to be provided in East Hampshire up to 2011 is 5, 500 which forms part of the County's baseline figure. The reserve sites in East Hampshire would need to accommodate an additional 1,500 dwellings. The need to bring forward the reserve sites will be determined by the strategic planning authorities (the County Council, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils) in conjunction with the District Council as part of the annual monitoring of housing supply.

1.15 At the time of the adoption of this Local Plan the outcome of the Inquiry into the Designation of a National Park for the South Downs was unknown. It may not be until 2007 or 2008 that a final decision is made on any confirmation of the Designation Order and the boundaries of the National Park.

1.16 Whilst the possibility of National Park designation is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application, it can carry only limited weight at this stage in the Council's current planning functions.

1.17 As progress is made towards the confirmation of the National Park Destination Order, however, so the materiality of the prospect for it will increase in importance.

1.18 The basis of planning policies for the National Park would include that which applies to AONBs. But these policies would have to take account of the statutory purposes of a National Park and the duties of a National Park Authority, as laid down in the Environment Act 1995.

1.19 If the Order is confirmed under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the area within the defined boundary would become the area where National Park purposes would apply.

1.20 In the meantime, the Council will not grant planning permission for any development that would prejudice the proposed National Park and its purposes.

1.21 A new National Park Authority would inherit the relevant parts of 15 separate development plans that make up the full coverage of the Designation Order area. An immediate priority will be to prepare its own planning policies in a new Local Development Framework. In the interim, all the local planning authorities across the area may work together to consider the harmonisation of relevant existing key policies.

1.22 The Council has started work on a Local Development Framework (LDF). This must conform with a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for South East England - the South East Plan - which, when approved, is expected to provide figures for the amount of housing and employment development for each local planning authority area. If the RSS identifies additional pressures for development in those parts of the District not within any established National Park, the Council through its LDF could review the Local Plan policies. Special emphasis could be given to policies to

safeguard these other parts of the countryside for its own sake and to protect its landscape, character, appearance and any other relevant matters.

The Purpose of the Local Plan

1.23 The Local Plan has several functions. It:

- Develops the strategic policies of the Structure Plan Review in more detail at a local level by relating them to local needs and opportunities
- Allocates precise areas of land where development such as new homes, businesses, shops, open space, and community buildings will be allowed to meet current and future needs
- Shows areas where there are restrictions on new buildings
- Provides a detailed land use policy framework for deciding planning applications across East Hampshire
- Provides certainty for service providers (e.g. authorities responsible for health, education, water supply, gas and electricity) and for developers who need to know what development is likely to take place up to 2011
- Brings detailed planning issues before the public and other interested bodies and provides opportunities for consultation.

How to use the Plan

1.24 The Local Plan consists of :

- A Written Statement (this document) which is divided into a number of themes, from which the aims of the Plan are taken (set out later in Chapter 2). Under each theme are policies and proposals to guide the future use of land in the District and the reasons for them
- A Proposals Map covering the whole of the District with Inset Maps showing certain areas in more detail.

1.25 Individual properties can be identified on the maps (which are based on Ordnance Survey maps). People can then see if there are to be new buildings or other land-uses in their own area, and how the Local Plan might affect them.

1.26 The main policies and proposals of the Plan are set out in bold type and are cross-referenced to the Proposals Map so that the precise areas of land involved can be more easily understood. The Written Statement should be read as a whole. All proposals and policies of the Written Statement will be taken into account when considering development proposals. Should a discrepancy arise between the Written Statement and the Proposals Map, then the Written Statement prevails.

1.27 The Council will determine planning applications in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations that are related to the development and use of land in the public interest. Many of the policies contain criteria that must be met if the proposed development is to be allowed. If a planning application does not comply with the criteria and would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance, then it will be refused. Harm must be more than trivial to justify refusal of

planning permission. There is no need to qualify harm by such terms as “unacceptable”, “serious” or “significant”, however the omission of these qualifications does not diminish the force of the policies in the Plan.

1.28 Where the Local Plan is not relevant, for example where there are no relevant policies, or where policies pull in different directions so that there is no clear guide for a particular proposal, the planning application should be determined on its merits in the light of all material considerations.

1.29 The Plan does not attempt to specify an approved land use for every part of the District but refers instead to those areas where a particular policy or new land use will be applied. If a specific land use is not identified for a site then the District Council anticipates that the existing authorised use of the site will be continued, provided that it does not conflict with any other policies or proposals made in the Plan.

1.30 Where appropriate, the Council will amplify the policies of the Plan through supplementary planning documents or non-statutory planning guidance, including development briefs or guidelines for individual sites. These will be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications. There will be consultation on development briefs before they are adopted by the Council. Supplementary planning documents will be subject to public consultation except for minor amendments.

1.31 The Plan has tried to avoid jargon and too many technical words. Where such words have been used they are explained in a Glossary of Terms in Appendix A.

The Process and Local Community Involvement

1.32 Government legislation governs the way in which the Local Plan is prepared.

1.33 As well as taking into account Government advice and strategic requirements, the District Council is committed to involving the local community in helping to shape East Hampshire’s future. The Local Plan Second Review has been prepared as part of this approach. Ideas on the future of the District were obtained from the local community during the Council’s work to develop a Local Agenda 21 Strategy (a comprehensive programme of action for the 21st Century, endorsed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and aimed at achieving a more sustainable pattern of development). The issue of sustainable development is explained in Chapter 2.

1.34 This process involved public consultation, meetings with town and parish councils, area forums, workshops and focus group meetings with community groups and businesses. These discussions focused on local priorities and how we can work towards sustainable development.

1.35 Comments and ideas from the consultation exercise which related to land use were taken into account in preparing a Magazine on the Local Plan ‘Your Area, Your Future’, which set out the strategy, themes and policies for the new Plan. This was published for a six week consultation period between May and June 1998. The Magazine was distributed to every household and business in the District. A short questionnaire was included to gain feedback on the strategy and the policies.

1.36 The Council received nearly 2,000 responses. 93% of respondents were residents. The rest were amenity groups, town or parish councils, statutory consultees, developers or landowners and business interests. The Consultation exercise on the Magazine was very successful in generating a wide range of views and issues which has helped to influence the content of this Local Plan Second Review.

1.38 Over 2,000 respondents wrote to the Council to support or to object to the Plan (First Deposit) which was published for public consultation towards the end of 1999. The Council analysed these comments and, where possible, negotiated with objectors to find out if there is a way of changing the Plan to overcome their concerns. Changes were incorporated into the Plan (Second Deposit) to take account of objections to the First Deposit Plan, the approved County Structure Plan Review (1996 - 2011) and new Government Guidance.

1.39 Any remaining objections, or any new objections to the changes made to the revised Plan that could not be resolved, were considered by an independent Inspector (appointed by the Government) at a Local Plan Inquiry. The Inquiry took place from April 2003 to May 2004. The Council then considered the Inspector's recommendations and made Modifications to the Plan. There was an opportunity for public comment on the Modifications.

Other Related Strategies and Documents

1.40 The Local Plan is a key document for the Council but it only contains land use policies. It is complemented by a number of non-statutory documents relating to other Council activities, strategies or policies.

1.41 The 'Community Strategy' is the main corporate document which sets out the priorities and objectives for the Council . It includes the broad objectives for the Council as a whole, and those that can be achieved through working in partnership with other agencies, organisations and the community.

1.42 The 'Community Strategy' requires the Local Plan and other Council documents to promote sustainable development.