



Planning Policy, EHDC, PO Box 310, Petersfield, GU32 9HN
01730 234339 | LocalPlan@easthants.gov.uk

East Hampshire District Council Response to the Basingstoke and Deane Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18, 2025)

East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's (BDBC) Draft Spatial Strategy Regulation 18 Consultation November 2025.

We welcome the concise presentation of the material and offer our overall support for the progression of the Basingstoke Local Plan. We recognise the considerable work undertaken to establish a robust spatial strategy and to meet identified housing and employment needs across the plan period. We are encouraged by the positive and proactive approach BDBC is taking in planning for growth in a sustainable manner.

Overall Spatial Strategy and Housing Provision

We appreciate that BDBC has, like us, experienced an increase in its housing number following publication of the NPPF in December 2024 and updated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In view of that, we welcome that the proposed spatial strategy will provide for at least the required housing number (20,402 homes over the plan period) and is not seeking assistance with meeting development needs for housing (or any other uses) from its neighbours.

However, despite the above, we would refer you to consider recent correspondence from the appointed Inspector examining the Mid Sussex District Plan¹. Despite no guidance on the matter, the Inspector notes in Appendix 3 that there is "*considerable risk in operating with no supply headroom or a very small contingency and it is strongly in the Council's interest to maintain adequate supply headroom over and above the housing requirement figure*". As drafted the local plan will meet its housing requirement with very little flexibility in terms of additional supply, which could have implications on maintaining a 5-year housing land supply and preventing policies becoming out of date.

¹ See <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/qmfo5lb1/idjb-01-initial-letter-to-mid-sussex.pdf>

EHDC strongly supports that a key principle of the Local Plan is to maximise the use of brownfield land, making the best use of available opportunities and limiting the amount of greenfield land lost to development. It is commended that further work has led to the identification of more homes in Basingstoke town centre and at Basing View.

EHDC notes that the Draft Local Plan puts forward a range of strategic and non-strategic allocations to ensure a sufficient supply of new homes, including several large-scale communities such as Northern Manydown, Popham Garden Village, Southern Manydown, and the newly proposed Upper Swallick Garden Village. The scale and distribution of these allocations are set out in the Draft Spatial Strategy and SPS5 policies.

EHDC is broadly supportive of the intention to meet housing needs in full within the borough, and we acknowledge that these strategic sites have the potential to deliver high-quality, mixed use neighbourhoods that provide both homes and supporting infrastructure. However, we would encourage continued caution regarding the cumulative reliance on multiple very large sites. Experience across the region suggests that new settlements of this scale often experience slower build-out trajectories, and there may be challenges in delivering the full quantum of development within the plan period. This can have implications for maintaining a rolling five year housing land supply and ensuring timely infrastructure delivery.

We therefore encourage BDBC to maintain appropriate flexibility within the strategy, including appropriate contingency measures, to ensure resilience if any large allocation delivers more slowly than anticipated.

As noted in our response to the 2024 Draft Local Plan, we recognise that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council needs to take a stepped approach to delivery (as shown in the trajectory), mainly as a result of the reliance of the large strategic sites noted above. This approach is preferable to being unable to meet needs. We continue to agree that sometimes planning for larger sites with their supporting infrastructure is a preferable and more sustainable approach, where possible, and that larger sites can take time to deliver – but need that time to ensure they are fit for purpose and best meeting housing, community and infrastructure needs. However, the caution identified above remains.

There remains support for the various regeneration proposals across the Borough that will benefit local communities with new homes in an improved local environment.

Upper Swallick Garden Village (Policy SP5.9)

EHDC notes the introduction of Upper Swallick Garden Village as a new allocation within the Draft Local Plan, providing approximately 1,200 homes within the plan period and around 2,500 homes in total. We acknowledge the clarity of BDBC's vision for Upper Swallick as a sustainable, well designed new community with strong

landscape-led principles, comprehensive green infrastructure, high-quality architecture, and strong local identity.

Proximity to the EHDC Administrative Boundary

Upper Swallick lies in comparatively close proximity to East Hampshire District's administrative boundary. While it does not directly abut settlements within East Hampshire, its strategic nature and scale mean that:

- Cross boundary impacts, particularly related to transport, traffic movements, and infrastructure capacity on routes such as the A339, may be experienced in EHDC's area. Comments from various local plan consultations in East Hampshire also highlights existing pressures on this corridor.
- The site's elevated and open landscape setting means there may also be indirect visual or environmental impacts extending toward the northern parts of East Hampshire, depending on final master planning and mitigation measures.

EHDC therefore requests continued engagement on cross boundary matters as detailed transport modelling, landscape assessment, and infrastructure planning evolve.

Delivery Timescales and Implementation

Given the site's scale and its status as a new garden village, EHDC notes that delivery, especially early phases, are likely to require significant upfront investment in transport infrastructure, utilities, social infrastructure, and green infrastructure. The associated policy clearly sets out guiding development principles to assist with Master planning and ensure the site is developed as sustainably as possible. These are important aspects to inform future decisions on the site.

While these principles are strongly supported, it is recognised that the complexity of delivering a standalone new settlement can extend build-out periods beyond initial projections. This reinforces the importance of monitoring and contingency planning at the borough-wide level.

Meeting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

EHDC welcomes the clear policy direction set out in the Draft Local Plan regarding the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, particularly within strategic allocations.

EHDC considers this an appropriate and positive approach, embedding the need for traveller accommodation directly within major mixed-use developments. This integrated method reflects good practice by:

- Ensuring pitches form part of well-designed, sustainable communities;

- Reducing reliance on smaller standalone sites that can sometimes experience greater social or environmental constraints;
- Helping ensure needs are met on an equal footing with wider housing needs.

However, we wish to further understand the evidence base identifying the need for Traveller accommodation, as a GTAA does not appear on the completed evidence base webpage <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/draft-local-plan-evidence>, and the last version on the website is dated 2017. In early 2024, the Statement of Common Ground signed with BDBC and EHDC said, "Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council is currently updating its Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and will relook at needs and strategy to meet needs in its forthcoming Local Plan consultation."

We encourage BDBC to continue developing its evidence base on traveller accommodation, ensuring that the total number and location of pitch provision across the plan area remain aligned with the latest needs assessments. Without this, it is not possible to demonstrate that need can be met on the large sites, as at the moment, the allocation is expressed as "Permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches, proportionate to the size of the site when considered in relation to the overall need for pitches as set out in the latest version of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment;" We would advise being clear on the quantum of pitches required on each site.

EHDC's GTAA 2024 identifies a high need for Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. EHDC has carried out many calls for sites and continues to consider all options for meeting need, including provision on strategic sites. There remains the possibility that EHDC cannot meet need in full and may have to seek assistance from neighbouring councils.

EHDC wishes to continue dialogue with BDBC on this cross boundary strategic matter and to better understand the latest position on need.

Duty to Cooperate and Continued Engagement

As a neighbour, we have worked together now for many years through the Duty to Co-operate and the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground in 2024, in support of the East Hampshire Draft Local Plan 2024. We have agreed cross boundary strategic matters, which are listed in the signed Statement of Common Ground 2024, and recently reviewed these as part of the forthcoming publication of the update to the East Hampshire Duty to Co-operate Framework.

EHDC welcomes this ongoing constructive engagement between our authorities.

Matters where further cooperation will be particularly important include:

- Transport impacts on the A339 corridor and connecting rural routes;

- The alignment of infrastructure delivery with housing trajectories, especially for strategic sites.
- Meeting the need for Traveller accommodation.

We appreciate the scale of the challenge in creating a balanced plan that is both deliverable and responsive to needs across North Hampshire. EHDC remains committed to working collaboratively and constructively with BDBC as the plan progresses to the next stages.

Other Comments

It is noted that the plan period would run until 2042 and in line with the published Local Development Scheme (LDS), adoption is expected in 'Winter 2027'. There are immediate concerns that any slippage regarding adoption would mean the plan-period does not reflect the NPPF requirement that strategic policies cover "a minimum period of 15 years from adoption". Although EHDC has a similar adoption date, we have been advised by the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) to extend the plan period to 2043 to ensure consistency with national policy.

Although the topic-focussed development management policies in the 2024 draft plan have not been reconsulted on, it is advised that they are cross-checked with the currently decision-making policies currently being consulted on by Government as part of its Draft NPPF consultation. It is important that policies with the new local plan continue to carry weight upon adoption and it is therefore imperative that due diligence is made to conform with national policy direction as best as possible.

Conclusion

In summary, EHDC welcomes and supports BDBC's ambition to meet local housing needs and plan proactively for long-term growth. However, we encourage continued caution regarding the concentration of growth in multiple large strategic allocations, given the inherent delivery risks.

Please note that this response has been endorsed by the Portfolio Holder for Regulation and Enforcement, Cllr Angela Glass.

We look forward to ongoing positive cooperation as BDBC continues to develop its Local Plan, especially in relation to the new Upper Swallick allocation's proximity to East Hampshire and the potential for transport and environmental impacts.