

Please note:

As of 28th January 2015 this statement was revoked

Interim Housing Policy Statement (IHPS)

Effective following public consultation from 27 February 2014.

Please note that this Interim Statement does not apply to land in the South Downs National Park.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Hampshire District Council (including the South Downs National Park area) can not currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. This, together with the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)), has significant implications for how the Council considers applications for new housing. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF asserts that the relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The five year housing land supply is based on the housing requirement in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (further proposed Modifications, August 2013) of 10,060 dwellings (592dpa) between 2011 and 2028.
- 1.2 In addition, the interpretation of the implications of the NPPF guidance on 'sustainable development' and recent appeal decisions have clearly indicated that where a Local Plan is not in place then proposals for 'sustainable development' will take precedence, even where a Council has an adequate five year housing land supply. This Interim Statement aims to provide guidance, therefore, until the emerging Local Plan: Allocations document or a Neighbourhood Plan is in place. The intention is to manage development so that it is not allowed in the wrong locations and of an inappropriate scale. This document therefore provides guidance which will be used in the determination of planning applications. Permission will only be granted for development that constitutes 'sustainable development'.
- 1.3 The Council must continue to judge planning applications on their individual merits and cannot argue that applications must wait until the emerging Local Plan is complete. It needs, therefore, to manage the delivery of housing sites by giving guidance as to which sites might be appropriate for development in the short term, relying on the future adoption of the emerging Local Plan to provide firm direction.

2.0 Status of this document

- 2.1 This Interim Statement seeks to pull national guidance and existing saved local plan policy together; it provides a local interpretation of sustainable development in East Hampshire.

2.2 It is recognised that the adoption of the Interim Housing Policy Statement will fall outside of the statutory procedures for development plan adoption and that it will not form part of the Development Plan. The Interim Statement will however be relied upon as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

3.0 The Development Plan

3.1 Planning legislation¹, as re-iterated in the NPPF, requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan is the “saved” policies of the East Hampshire District Local Plan; Second Review, adopted in 2006 (referred to here as the adopted Local Plan). The ‘saved’ policies will be replaced over the next few years by new policies in the emerging East Hampshire District Local Plan (referred to here as the emerging Local Plan) when it is adopted. The emerging Local Plan will consist of two documents the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the Local Plan: Allocations.

3.2 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF asserts that the relevant policies for the supply of housing, which in the Council’s case are those included in the adopted Local Plan, should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.

4.0 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

4.1 The NPPF is a material consideration when determining planning applications, paragraph 14 of which states:

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking...For decision-taking this means (unless material consideration indicate otherwise):

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in (the) Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

¹ Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;

- 4.2 Consideration should also be given to other policies of the NPPF, where relevant.

5.0 Local Context

- 5.1 The approach put forward in this document is based on identifying criteria that accord with national and local planning policies. There are “saved” policies in the adopted Local Plan that give guidance on development of sites within Settlement Policy Boundaries. This Interim Statement relates to sites **outside existing Settlement Policy Boundaries**.
- 5.2 The Council wants new homes delivered in the right places to meet the needs of the District. Whilst planning applications for outline permission can be made, they ought to be accompanied by an Indicative Layout in order to judge the potential housing mix and layout. However, the emphasis will be on sites being put forward under this Interim Statement approach being “deliverable”² at the time that they are put forward. Therefore detailed applications would be preferred and be accompanied by evidence of deliverability. They should not, for example, be dependent upon delivery of significant off-site infrastructure; and should be fully in the applicant’s control. Those proposing development of a site are therefore encouraged to demonstrate a strong desire and willingness to develop it in the short term, with the necessary evidence to back up such statements.
- 5.3 The Interim Statement is not intended to apply to sites that can come forward at a later stage as these can be considered as the emerging Local Plan is progressed towards adoption. Applicants will also be expected to show that they intend to develop sites promptly so that the dwellings start to be delivered within a short period [up to a maximum of 2 years]. Demonstration of deliverability and the intention to develop will be required to support planning applications and to help enable the Council to resist applications for less suitable sites. Where a planning permission has not started to be implemented within the 2 year time limit, it should not be presumed that the permission will be renewed.
- 5.4 Sites should be in sustainable locations, adjacent to existing settlements defined by a Settlement Policy Boundary, as these settlements generally have facilities likely to be needed by new residents. They should also be acceptable in all other respects, e.g. highways access, no flood risk and contribute to affordable housing.

² As defined by the National Planning Policy Framework at footnote 11, page 12; “To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.”

- 5.5 The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has already assessed the suitability of many sites to accommodate housing development. To be included in the SHLAA, sites should be suitable, available and deliverable. The Council has maintained a 'search for sites' for inclusion in the SHLAA, annually since 2008. A more recent 'call for sites' to the development industry has just been completed. The inclusion of a site in the SHLAA does not mean that it will necessarily be granted planning permission; in certain cases a change in circumstances or more detailed assessment of the site through the planning application process may show a site to be unacceptable. The most recent SHLAA document and details of the SHLAA sites is included on the Council's website <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/ehdc/planningpolicy.nsf/webpages/The+Strategic+Housing+Land+Availability+Assessment> . Planning applications that come forward for housing sites that have not been a part of the SHLAA process will also be assessed against this Interim Statement.
- 5.6 The scale of housing appropriate in a settlement will be based on the up-to-date work on the settlement hierarchy which is included within the JCS. This sets out a hierarchy of settlements; (1) market towns, (2) large local service centres, (3) small local service centres and (4) other settlements with a settlement policy boundary. A fifth category is identified as small rural villages/hamlets within the countryside. These settlements do not have a settlement policy boundary and are not deemed suitable for development under this Interim Statement because they lack essential facilities.
- 5.7 In category 4 settlements (other settlements with a Settlement Policy Boundary) the range of provision of services, public transport and employment and the relative accessibility to these features will form important considerations as to the amount of new housing likely to be considered appropriate within individual settlements. Sites should be of a scale appropriate to the adjoining settlement. Smaller scale sites that provide for the gradual growth of settlements are more likely to be suitable than sites that would significantly change the character of a place.
- 5.8 Appendix 1 includes an extract from the JCS containing a description of each category and a list of settlements in each of the four main categories.
- 5.9 The Council will also have regard to social issues and infrastructure, which may constrain the amount of new housing acceptable within a settlement, or justify the need for phasing requirements. The NPPF³ recognises that it is important to support "*strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and*

³ National Planning Policy Framework, pp2 paragraph 7.

future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being". In considering proposals for development the Council will give consideration to the views of the local community expressed in Town and Village Design Statements, Town and Parish Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and Local Landscape Character Assessments.

6.0 Affordable Housing and Housing Mix: Meeting local needs

6.1 Housing proposals coming forward will be expected to carefully identify and reflect the needs of local communities, in relation to the amount, size, type and mix of tenures proposed. Proposals should also recognise the need to include housing for the elderly and those with special or supported needs and meet Lifetime Homes Standard as appropriate. The Council will have regard to available evidence of local housing requirements in negotiating and determining planning applications relying on this policy. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment has identified that the majority of net household growth is projected to be associated with one person households and couples with no dependant children. This rise in smaller households is largely driven by an ageing population in East Hampshire. Housing mix on proposed sites should reflect this trend.

6.2 Development should seek to maximise the delivery of affordable housing as indicated in the emerging JCS under Policy CP11. This interim policy sets a target of at least 40% affordable housing provision, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. For the purposes of this policy where higher levels of affordable housing will not prejudice the deliverability or commercial viability of the scheme and where there are significant un-met needs for affordable housing, the Council will seek to negotiate more than 40% of affordable housing. All sites coming forward under the IHPS will be expected to provide for affordable housing. For sites of 5 dwellings or more this should be provided on site and for sites of 4 or less, a developer contribution toward off-site provision will be sought, depending on site circumstances.

7.0 Five Year Housing Land Supply

7.1 The five year housing land supply calculation is dynamic and changes as planning permissions are granted or refused. Therefore it is critical that any developer considering submitting a planning application subject to the Interim Statement should get the latest position on the five year housing supply calculation from the Council.

7.2 The Council will take forward site allocations through the Local Plan: Allocations document or a Neighbourhood Plan in order to enable local

communities to engage in the process of deciding which sites are the most appropriate from the pool of available sites in order to meet the housing target

Interim Housing Policy Statement: Policy Criteria

New housing development may be acceptable outside, but immediately adjacent or contiguous with, existing Settlement Policy Boundaries providing the following criteria, where relevant to the development, have been satisfactorily addressed:

- 1) The proposal complies with the relevant Saved Policies of the adopted Local Plan**
- 2) The level of housing permitted in any one settlement under this Interim Housing Policy Statement should not exceed the level of housing proposed as new allocations for that settlement in the Joint Core Strategy: as follows:**

Alton – 700 new homes

Horndean - 700 new homes

Clanfield – 200 new homes

Liphook – 175 new homes

Four Marks/South Medstead - 175 new homes

Rowlands Castle - 150 new homes

Other villages outside the South Downs National Park – 150 new homes

The scale of development in the other villages (those without a settlement figure) should be appropriate to the size, character and role of the settlement. In deciding whether the scale is appropriate, account will be taken of the cumulative impact of extant unimplemented permissions for the settlement concerned.

- 3) The townscape and landscape character is conserved or enhanced, especially where the character of an area is specifically recognised, such as Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.**

4) Proposals adjacent to the South Downs National Park should not have an adverse impact on the purpose of conserving or enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park or its setting.

5) Any new housing that is proposed to be located within 400m of the boundary of the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA) will be required to undertake a project-specific Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This must form a part of the planning application process to demonstrate that either no adverse effect on the ecological integrity of the SPA will occur or that adequate measures will be put in

place to avoid or (as a secondary solution) adequately mitigate any adverse effects. Such measures must be agreed with Natural England and the planning authority. In order to undertake such an assessment, it is likely that information on the distribution of birds for which the SPA is designated would be required.

6) In addition, if housing proposals are capable of affecting the SPA no matter how distant from the site, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis as to whether a project-specific HRA is required (this should be assessed at the HRA Screening Assessment stage). The requirement is likely to vary depending on the size of the site, the 'in combination' effects and its distance from the SPA. Advice on this should be sought from Natural England at the earliest opportunity.

7) The proposed development creates safe and accessible environments that offer good access via a range of transport modes. Sites where it is possible to walk easily to a range of facilities will be considered preferable to sites that are further away and which would make car journeys into town/village centres more likely.

8) There is a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures that reflect local housing requirements, including housing for the elderly, in accordance with the saved policies of the Local Plan.

9) A target of at least 40% affordable housing provision will be sought on all sites coming forward under this policy unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. The Council will explore the capability of a proposal to provide a higher level of affordable housing where this would have significant benefits for the community.

10) Land is demonstrated to be used effectively and comprehensively. Arbitrarily low density or piecemeal developments which limit the amount of housing will not be acceptable where it has not been justified or fails to provide housing necessary to meet the needs of the community.

11) The density of housing is appropriate and does not harm the established character and appearance of the area or settlement. Where higher relative densities are proposed these will only be permitted if potential impacts have been mitigated by excellent design.

12) The proposal is demonstrated to be deliverable and viable, having regard to the necessary on-site infrastructure, affordable housing provision and other requirements. Similarly, the proposal is not constrained, having regard to other committed developments, by the need for significant off-site infrastructure which is not planned/funded.

13) The Council will condition any planning permission to commence within 2 years to maximise the likelihood of delivery of housing within the District.

Settlement Hierarchy – JCS Extract

- 4.5 A sustainable hierarchy of settlements is set out below based upon the accessibility of settlements, the availability of a broad range of facilities, their economic role, and the environmental constraints to development. Development in all settlements will have to be consistent with maintaining and enhancing their character.
- 4.6 Level 1 Market Towns are the most sustainable locations for most new development in terms of access to local services and facilities. Within environmental constraints, they will continue to offer the widest range of shopping and to be main destinations for social, leisure, entertainment, cultural, commercial and economic activity, serving wide catchment areas. Small, independent traders will continue to thrive, contributing to a strong sense of place.
- 4.7 Level 2 Large Local Service Centres have a range of services and are suitable locations to accommodate new development. Their role will be maintained to ensure they continue to serve a wider, rural hinterland with vibrant centres and a range of local services. They will complement the market towns by providing for main convenience food shopping and a reasonable range of other shops and other services.
- 4.8 Level 3 Small Local Service Centres have a more limited range of services but are suitable locations to accommodate some new development. These centres will have different roles depending on their size, but they will all play an important part in the life of their communities. They will be maintained to ensure that they provide basic food and grocery shopping, supported by a limited choice and range of other shops plus a range of non-retail services and community uses. Modest development to meet local needs for housing, employment, community services and infrastructure will secure their continuing vitality and ensure thriving communities.
- 4.9 Level 4 Other settlements with a settlement policy boundary have a limited range of local services and may be appropriate for some further small scale local development.
- 4.10 Level 5 Rural villages considered as being in the countryside with limited access to facilities and workplaces and new development limited to that which is appropriate to rural areas (see Policy CP2).
- 4.11 The majority of development will be focused in or adjoining the most sustainable towns and larger villages where it is consistent with maintaining and enhancing their character. Policy boundaries for each settlement will be defined through a Development Allocations DPD taking into account sites allocated to meet the community's development needs. The proposed hierarchy is:

South Downs National Park	Position in Hierarchy
Petersfield	Market Town
Liss	Small Local Service Centre
Blackmoor, Binsted, Blendworth, Bucks Horn Oak, Buriton, Chawton, East Meon, East Worldham, Greatham, High Cross, Hill Brow, Liss Forest, Lower Farringdon, Selborne, Sheet, Steep, Stroud, Upper Farringdon, West Liss	Other settlements with a settlement policy boundary
All other settlements	Small rural villages/hamlets within the countryside

North of South Down National Park and Whitehill Bordon	Position in Hierarchy
Alton	Market Town
Whitehill Bordon (see chapter 9)	
Liphook	Large Local Service Centre
Four Marks/South Medstead, Grayshott	Small Local Service Centres
Arford, Beech, Bentley, Bentley Station, Bentworth, Bramshott, Griggs Green, Headley, Headley Down, Holt Pound, Holybourne, Kingsley, Lindford, Medstead village, Passfield Common, Ropley, Ropley Dean, Upper Froyle	Other settlements with a settlement policy boundary
All other settlements	Small rural villages/hamlets within the countryside

Southern Parishes	Position in Hierarchy
Horndean,	Large Local Service Centre
Clanfield, Rowlands Castle	Small Local Service Centre
Catherington, Lovedean	Other settlements with a settlement policy boundary
All other settlements	Small rural villages/hamlets within the countryside