**PARISH CONSULTATION MEETING: MONDAY 24 OCTOBER 2016**

**HBC CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT (REBECCA BURNETT) : BRIEFING ON THE HARROGATE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2014 – 2035**

**Draft Local Plan Growth Strategy**

The Council’s draft Local Plan is based on a growth strategy that is centred around the key public transport corridors. Therefore the need for new homes and jobs will be met as far as possible in those settlements that are well related to the key public transport corridor (key bus corridors and proximity to a rail station on the Leeds-Harrogate-York line)

The scale of development will reflect:

• the settlement’s role and character

• its’ relationship to the public transport corridor

• the need to deliver new homes and jobs

• the need to maintain or enhance services and facilities in rural areas

• the capacity of infrastructure and services within the settlement

The strategy is looking to deliver 11,697 new homes and 25ha of employment land as a minimum. To support the overall strategy a hierarchy of settlements has been identified. This is as follows:

**Main settlements:** Harrogate, K’bro, Ripon

*(Major allocations of land will be provided to deliver new homes, employment land and other uses where necessary or on land specifically identified for employment purposes outside of the main settlement)*

**New Settlement:** Either at Flaxby or Hammerton

*(A major new strategic allocation for housing with associated employment and supporting services and facilities)*

**Local Service Centres:** Smaller market towns of Boroughbridge, Pateley, Masham)

*(Allocations of land provided for new homes and local job opportunities)*

**Primary and Secondary Service Villages:** These are the district’s most sustainable villages, offering residents the best range of services and facilities in the District’s more rural areas.

*(Allocations of land for new homes; with new village shops and businesses encouraged to support their continued sustainabilty)*

**Smaller Villages:** The district’s smaller villages with a much more limited range of facilities

*(Infill/rounding off via development limit)*

**Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) / Site Assessment Process**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) maintain an adequate supply of housing land in their area.  As part of this, they must establish realistic assumptions about the supply of suitable and available deliverable housing land within their area through the preparation of housing land availability assessments. The Council issued a ‘call for sites’ in 2014 and again in 2015. Sites submitted to the Council have been considered as part of the preparation of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

The SHELAA is an important part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of the emerging Local Plan and demonstrate that enough land can be identified to meet policy requirements. It is not a planning decision making document and it does not, therefore, determine if a site should be allocated for development or whether planning permission will be granted for development: the allocation of sites for future housing or economic development will be identified through the emerging Harrogate District Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans.

In order to determine which of the sites should be included in the draft local plan a more rigorous site selection process has been carried out using the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal (full details at Appendix 1)

In preparing the local plan, the council looks to make the best use of previously developed land, often referred to as brownfield land. However, given the nature of our district this is in short supply when compared to places like Leeds or York, for example. It is also the case that often brownfield land is in productive use, for example as employment areas, albeit perhaps low grade and it is important to retain these.

**Traffic Modelling/Wider infrastructure**

In preparing the Draft Local Plan the Council has undertaken a number of evidence base studies. Two key pieces of work are a strategic traffic assessment and also wider, infrastructure capacity work. The strategic traffic model has looked at the impact on the local and strategic highway network of three alternative growth options

1. Urban focussed
2. A new settlement at Green Hammerton
3. A new settlement at Flaxby

The strategic model includes an assessment of natural growth, committed development and future local plan development, as well as appropriate mitigation measures. The assessment will be published on line alongside other evidence base documents at the start of the consultation on the Local Plan.

**Affordable Housing/Housing Mix**

Average house prices within Harrogate district are higher than national and regional averages. The availability of affordable housing, therefore, is a key issue to be addressed as it impacts upon the retention of skills and talent in the district and has a major influence upon the local economy and quality of life. This is recognised in the council's Corporate Plan which identifies affordable housing as one of the key challenges facing the district. Under the 'Supporting Communities' priority, addressing people's housing needs is identified as one of the outcomes to be achieved and the Corporate Delivery Plan identifies increasing the district's housing stock as one of the measures to deliver this outcome.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment provides an assessment of affordable housing need in the district and identified a need of just under 5,400 affordable homes over the plan period, equating to a requirement for 256 additional affordable homes per annum; this provides compelling evidence for the need for a strong policy steer on the provision of affordable housing.

The primary vehicle for delivering affordable housing is by requiring a percentage of homes on market housing schemes to be affordable in perpetuity. The council has a good track record of delivering affordable housing and current adopted policy looks to secure 40% on all qualifying sites subject to viability. The emerging local plan is also proposing a 40% target. However, further viability work is required on a number of key assumptions and this may result in this percentage changing for the Publication consultation.

Affordable housing issues do not just affect urban areas, many of the District’s more expensive locations are its rural areas and it is important that the affordable housing policy is applied across the whole of the district.

Achieving a good mix of housing both in terms of size, type and tenure is important in order to achieve sustainable communities. The final mix of housing is subject to negotiation with the applicant who is expected to have reference to evidence on mix in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment as well as the ability of specific sites to accommodate this and the character and existing housing stock of the area. Where applicants propose a mix of housing that does not respond to identified needs, they will be expected to provide robust evidence relating to the identified level of housing need, existing housing stock, financial viability or deliverability to support their proposals.

It is not possible to be prescriptive as to what constitutes an appropriate mix because different sites have different characteristics, opportunities and challenges and therefore there is no one size fits all. The Council does not insist on the provision of bungalows as part of schemes as they have a large plot area relative to floor size which has the dual effect of requiring more land to be used and also has an impact on viability. However, the Council’s emerging local plan will include, as part of its housing mix policy a requirement that on developments over 10 dwellings a proportion of these are designed to be adaptable to meet the changing needs of people as they get older; enabling more people to remain in their own homes which is generally what people wish to do.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Commuted Sums**

The council has started work on preparing a CIL for the district with consultants currently preparing evidence on the viability of development in the district and the scope to charge CIL. This work will recommend to the council what CIL rates could reasonable be supported by development and contribute towards the delivery of infrastructure. The CIL is to be developed alongside the Local Plan with consultation on a preliminary draft charging scheduled early 2017.

There are two recent changes that have required the council to change the way it operates the commuted sums policy for open space and village halls:

1. The 2010 CIL Regulations introduced a restriction on the use of planning obligations that came into force on 6 April 2015. The restriction means that the council cannot ask for contributions towards a specific open space/village hall if we have already entered into 5 or more planning obligations towards that facility since 6 April 2010.
2. A recent Court of Appeal decision I May of this year has enabled the Government to reintroduce amendments to Planning Policy Guidance placing restrictions on the circumstances where contributions for affordable housing and tariff style planning obligations (such as commuted sums) can be sought from small scale and self-build development. As a result commuted sums can no longer be sought from:
3. developments of 10-units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1000sqm (gross internal area) in urban areas (Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon) and non-designated rural areas.
4. from developments of 5-units or less in designated rural areas (which includes most of the district outside of the three main settlements).

However, this second restriction will in some way help the council to maximise the level of funding we receive towards open space/village halls as it will reduce the number of smaller developments in both rural and urban areas that will contribute towards the 5 contribution threshold introduced by the CIL Regulations.

**Consultation arrangements**

Parish Council’s should have already received information from the Council advising them of the pre-consultation launch event on 25 October at Harrogate International Centre and of the exhibitions that the council will be running during the consultation. The pre-launch Local Plan pop-up café is an opportunity for individuals and organisations to preview the Draft Local Plan. Officers will be on hand to answer any questions and help people sign up to the consultation portal ready for the start of the consultation.

The consultation starts on 11 November and runs until 23 December. During that time Officers will be holding a number of public exhibitions. This will provide an opportunity of people to speak to planning officers about the policies and proposals that are included in the Draft Plan.

Increasingly we are finding that people want to communicate with the council electronically and we are keen for people to engage with this process through the consultation portal <http://consult.harrogate.gov.uk/portal> and this address is given on all of our literature. However, we do appreciate that not everyone can or wants to engage in this way. This is why we continue to make hard copies of the local plan available at council offices and public libraries across the District. Responses can be made via the portal, email or letter. All responses will be treated in the same way.

**Exhibition dates and venues**

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| * Saturday 12 November, 10am - 3pm: Ripon Community House, Sharow View, 75 Allhallowgate, Ripon, HG4 1LE
* Tuesday 15 November, 2 - 7pm: Masham Town Hall, Little Market Place, Masham, HG4 4DY
* Thursday 17 November, 2 - 7pm: Pateley Bridge Methodist Church, Ripon Road, Pateley Bridge, HG3 5NL
* Saturday 19 November, 10am - 3pm: Gracious Street Methodist Church, Gracious Street, Knaresborough, HG5 8DS
* Tuesday 22 November, 2 - 7pm: The Jubilee Room, 17 St James Square, Boroughbridge, YO51 9AR
* Wednesday 23 November, 2 - 7pm: Ripon Town Hall, Market Place South, Ripon, HG4 1DD
* Thursday 24 November, 2 - 7pm: Knaresborough House, High Street, Knaresborough, HG5 0HW
* Saturday 26 November, 10am - 3pm: Wesley Centre, Oxford Street, Harrogate, HG1 1PP
* Tuesday 29 November, 2 - 7pm: Green Hammerton Village Hall, Harrogate Road, Green Hammerton, YO26 8AE
* Wednesday 30 November, 2 - 7pm: Harrogate Baptist Church, Victoria Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 5RD
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**Next steps/Timescale**

Following the close of the consultation, the council will consider the responses that have been made and decide whether there is a need to make amendments to the plan. At the same time the council will be updating various pieces of its evidence base to ensure that it reflects the most up to date information and finalising work on infrastructure provision and work around deliverability and viability of the plan’s proposals.

The plan will then be approved by full council for Publication consultation. This is a formal stage in the plan making process, after which the plan is submitted for independent Examination.

The timetable for plan production is set out in the Local Development Scheme. The key dates beyond the upcoming consultation are as follows:

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|  | **Stage of Plan Making** | **Timescale** |
| Regulation 19 | Formal Publication consultation on the Local Plan | July 2017 |
| Regulation 22 | Submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State | Winter 2017 |
| Regulation 24 | Examination of the Local Plan | Summer 2018 |
| Regulation 26 | Adoption of the Local Plan | Autumn 2018 |

**APPENDIX 1**

**Site Selection Process**

The following steps were undertaken:

**Stage 1: Data gathering**

A desktop study was undertaken using all known map based information about sites. All sites were visited by planning policy officers and site descriptions and notable characteristics of the sites collated. This information has formed the base data upon which the site assessments have been made.

**Stage 2: Initial Sift**

Using the desktop information all sites were considered against the criteria listed below to sift out those sites that were unsuitable for allocation at this time:

* Site size/previous permission
	+ Site is too small to be allocated i.e. less than 0.25 hectares
	+ Site has planning permission
* Showstoppers
	+ Site is subject to international or national designation for biodiversity
	+ Site is subject to international or national designation as a heritage asset
	+ Site falls within Flood Zone 3 or removal of affected area would result in area of less than 0.25 hectares
	+ No physical point of access from the adopted highway into the site and no evidence to suggest one can be achieved

**Stage 3: Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA)**

To ensure the assessment of all remaining sites was carried out in a clear, consistent and robust manner each site was assessed against the objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal framework. The objectives cover environmental, social and economic issues and are designed to ensure a complete assessment of all strands of sustainability. Those sites that were considered to have the most positive and/or least adverse effect on the SA objectives, or where adequate mitigation is possible were taken forward for further consideration.

**Stage 4: Identification of additional factors which may affect the deliverability of a site**

Further consideration of the sites which have been subject to SA/SEA has also been undertaken to consider the following detailed factors:

* Does the highway access limit the capacity of the site
* Does the topography of the site affect the way it could be developed i.e. reducing the overall capacity of a site, increasing build costs
* Is the proposed use compatible with the neighbouring uses
* Would development in this location be detrimental to the local landscape, character of the settlement, conservation area and it setting or a listed building and its setting
* Is the current use of the site, if it is in use, the most appropriate and should it be retained
* How does the site relate to the existing pattern of development

**Stage 5: Assessment of site deliverability**

Finally consideration was given to the likely deliverability of the site, informed by the most recent SHELAA information and considered whether

* The site is available for development
* There has been development interest in the site
* There is no physical constraint which would prevent it from being developed
* There is no known viability issues