

Headline Main Modifications over the Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2032 as submitted for examination

The following list summarises the most notable Main Modifications to the Plan recommended by the Inspector:

1. An increase in the housing requirement from 388 homes per annum from 2016-2032 to 423 homes per annum for the 18 year Plan period 2014-2032. This is so that the Plan addresses Hart's objectively assessed housing need as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and accommodates Surrey Heath's unmet housing need of 731 homes (which equates to 41 homes per annum from 2014-2032). However no additional sites needed to be allocated. This issue was considered by Cabinet in March 2019 following a letter from the Inspector in February 2019. Cabinet agreed to accept the Inspector's recommendation in this regard.
2. The removal of Policy SS3 for a new settlement at Murrell Green/Winchfield due to concerns over the submitted evidence base. The Plan retains reference to planning strategically for the long term which could be delivered through a new settlement, subject to consideration of reasonable alternatives and a sufficient evidence base. This matter was also considered at Cabinet in March 2019. Cabinet agreed at the time to accept the Inspector's recommendation.
3. The addition of a strategic objective to encourage redevelopment of previously developed land;
4. A change to the affordable homes policy site size threshold from 11 or more units to 10 or more units, to reflect the new NPPF 2019;
5. A commitment to prepare and submit for examination a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document by January 2022;
6. Bartley Wood, Hook changes from a 'strategic' employment site to a 'locally important' employment site;
7. The removal of Policy NBE2 Gaps Between Settlements. The Inspector had concerns over the effectiveness of the policy given the indicative nature of the boundaries, and he felt the evidence base was inadequate to define those boundaries. He recommended replacing Policy NBE2 with an additional criterion at Policy NBE3 Landscape designed to do the same job, i.e. prevent development where it would lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements, or damage their separate identity. The Inspector is not of the view that this change weakens the protection provided by the development plan (paragraph 195). Furthermore the Inspector supported a change to the text clarifying that Gaps could be designated through future Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.