

EXPLANATORY NOTE

25 October 2018

1. In light of the transitional arrangements set out in Appendix I (paragraph 214) of the National Planning Policy Framework July 2018 this note has been prepared to explain the Council's current position in respect of housing need in Hart, and the housing requirement in the Local Plan.
2. The submitted Plan has a housing requirement of 388 homes per annum from 2016-2032 set out at Policy SSI. This was derived using the housing need figure generated by applying the Government's 2017 proposed standard method for assessing local housing need (a demographic component of 209 homes per annum from 2016 and an affordability uplift of 101 homes per annum, totalling 310 homes per annum). The Council then applied a further (non-standard) uplift of 25% to better meet the need for affordable housing, producing the requirement of 388 homes per annum.
3. The Council used the proposed standard method as a start point having followed the Government's transitional arrangements set out in Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places, September 2017. However, after the Plan was submitted the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018) with different transitional arrangements which result in Hart's Local Plan being examined against the *previous* NPPF (2012) and its associated pre-July 2018 Planning Policy Guidance. This required housing need to be established in a different way i.e. through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and *not* through the use of the standard method. The Government has also indicated that it has concerns over the latest outputs from the standard method and that it will consult on changes to the method later this year. Therefore, until such time as the Government has clarified its position, the use of the standard methodology for calculating local housing need cannot be relied upon for the purposes of the Hart Local Plan examination.
4. In light of this, the Council has decided that for the purposes of establishing housing need in Hart the relevant evidence is the Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath, November 2016 (HOU1a and HOU1b). This was prepared to comply with the NPPF 2012 and the Planning Practice Guidance at that time. The SHMA identified an objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) in Hart of 382 homes per annum from 2014-2032.
5. The Council does not consider it necessary to change Policy SSI or the housing requirement of 388 homes per annum to match precisely the published requirement. The assessment of housing need is not a precise science. Moreover, the requirement of 388 homes per annum from 2016 is very similar to (and in fact slightly exceeds) the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) identified in the SHMA, and no changes are needed to the Plan in terms of sites to accommodate the SHMA OAHN.
6. The Council has responded in full on this issue under Matter 3 of the Inspector's Matters and Issues for Examination.