

East Hertfordshire District Plan (2011-2033) Examination in Public

Inspector Christine Thorby DIPTP MRTPI

Inspector's Note 2 - Housing

This note follows the receipt of the new documents relating to the objectively assessed need for housing. These are:

West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Market Housing Assessment – Establishing the Full Objectively Assessed Need, July 2017 (ED112).

West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Market Housing Assessment – Affordable housing update, July 2017 (ED111).

Background

The Plan submitted for examination (East Herts District Plan, pre-submission consultation 2016) identifies, at Section 3.2, that the level of growth would be some 16,390 new homes by 2033. Paragraph 3.2.7 goes on to say that new household projections released by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in July 2016 show that by 2033, the population of East Herts is likely to be greater than originally expected. An updated SHMA for the whole market area shows an increase to around 19,500 new homes for East Herts by 2033. However, the Plan could only identify land to provide some 18,040 homes and sought to retain the lower level of growth with a future review dealing with any increase in OAN and supply.

My previous note (Inspector's Note 1)(ED102) indicated that the OAN had to take into account the most recent household projections and look to update the OAN and the final housing requirement accordingly. At the same time the Council was carrying out further work on figures for the housing market area as a whole which has resulted in the publication of new evidence contained in documents ED112 and ED111.

The new evidence

Document ED112 published in July 2017 relates to the housing market area. This indicates that the most recent household projections published in July 2016 have been taken into account. In addition, the document considers the Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimates up to mid-2016 published in June 2017 and the Greater London Authority (GLA) 2016 based, household projections published in July 2017. The overall conclusion of the document is to reduce the previous estimate contained in document HOP/011 from 54,608 to 51,700 for the whole market area, the consequence of which for East Herts is a reduction from 19,500 homes to 18,396 homes.

In order to understand how the new evidence compares with previous documents and determine whether the OAN would meet housing needs in East Herts I have the following requests/questions:

Q1. The GLA 2016 household projections have not been examined; therefore, what is their status? Can you provide more information about this document and about what parts are relied upon? Are there projections for West Essex and East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area, if so, can I see them. Similarly, can I see any separate projections for East Hertfordshire?

Q2. Please provide a summary of the differences between the calculations underpinning the OAN for the whole market area from 54,608 to 51,700 (upon which the East Herts figure is derived) explaining why a lower number has been arrived at as set out in document ED112.

Q3. Please provide a new summary table for the figures in ED112, as shown in figure 8 of Document HOP/011 'Updating the Overall Housing Need based on 2014 based projections for West Essex and East Herts', as this clearly shows the components of the baseline housing need and the further adjustments. Please can you clearly set out what the percentage is of the uplift comprising the further adjustment - is it 14%?

Q4. Section 3 of document ED112 indicates that an uplift of 20% might still be justified as a response to market signals, to align with future jobs and to be consistent with the approach taken in similar areas. The figures supporting these issues do not seem to have changed; however, a lower uplift is now proposed. Where is the evidence to show that this would be sufficient to address these matters including the worsening affordability index? What would the effect be on the component of affordable housing within the OAN?

Q5. I am not clear about how the precise numbers of dwellings (6,200) constituting the further adjustment have been reached as set out in Section 3 paragraph 3.25 of document ED112 and why it constitutes a reasonable level. Please can I have more information on how the uplift of was arrived at (this may become clearer in the summary table provided to answer Q3 above).

Q6. The new documents conclude with a revised OAN. Please can the Council provide an updated topic paper indicating their final housing requirement. Where has the Council considered (based on the new evidence) whether any further uplift is required for the requirement, for example, to increase the provision of affordable housing?

The OAN, including the components leading to the baseline housing need and the further adjustment, will form the basis for a hearing session on housing. Further details will be found in my Matters and Issues to be published shortly.

Christine Thorby

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