

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: REVIEW (2001-2011)

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the Borough Council produced its last Local Plan (1991-2001), which was adopted in July 1997, there has been an intense national debate about how best to meet forecast needs for development, particularly housing.
2. Much of the debate has centred on issues about ‘losing our countryside’ Understandably people are concerned about the continuing spread of many of our cities, towns and villages into surrounding countryside, to meet pressures for more housing, more roads, more offices, shops and workplaces.

WHY IS MORE DEVELOPMENT NEEDED?

3. It’s important to put these issues in the wider context. Demand for housing continues to grow. Whilst this is partly due to continuing growth of population, this is not the most significant factor. What is more significant is a number of changes of lifestyle affecting more and more of us. People are living longer, divorce and separation are becoming increasingly common and young people are setting up home on their own at younger ages.
4. All of these factors mean that the number of people in the average household is becoming fewer. Over time this means that the same number of people will need more houses or flats to be built to accommodate them.
5. While this may seem to some people to paint a depressing picture, it must be understood that this trend is stimulated by higher levels of income. The wealthier we become, as a society, the more personal space we demand and are prepared to pay for. Unfortunately not all of us benefit from this increased wealth to the same degree. But if enough housing isn’t provided to meet the increasing demands of those who can afford to pay, one result would be that demand for housing would significantly exceed supply and as a direct result house prices would rise even more sharply.
6. Clearly it is essential that we make provision for the housing need as projected by the government in Regional Planning Guidance for the South East and the Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review).
7. Although population growth is not the most significant cause of increased housing need, the population is still growing and therefore housing is not the only type of development we must provide for.

MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT

8. It is an important function of the planning process to direct essential new development to places where it will have the most benefit. That means making the most of opportunities to make better use of land which has already been developed.

9. Apart from avoiding needless loss of countryside, this approach also gives us the opportunity to create significant additional investment in existing towns and to restructure some of our older urban areas to better fit them for the needs of today and tomorrow. Increasing the population of existing towns will improve the viability of public transport, local shops and other local facilities.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

10. The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for all the people of the Borough. This plan is promoting major commercial redevelopment in Eastleigh Town Centre and directing development pressures to parts of our older urban areas where improvements are needed.
11. A number of significant previously developed sites are expected to come forward for redevelopment during the plan period and the Council will capitalise on these opportunities to reshape our existing urban areas.
12. The Council intends to carry out environmental improvements to local centres and to some of the Borough's older urban areas to bring about a renaissance of those areas making them even more attractive places in which to live.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

13. Development Plans set out the main considerations against which planning applications are decided and they provide guidance for a range of local agencies and interested parties. In the Borough of Eastleigh the Development Plan will consist of the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review 1996-2011 (prepared jointly by Hampshire County Council and the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton) and the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review which is prepared by the Borough Council.
14. The functions of the Local Plan which covers the whole Borough, include the following:-
 - (i) to guide development within the Borough up to the year 2011;
 - (ii) to reflect government policies on development in ways which suit local circumstances;
 - (iii) to put into effect the policies of the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review and relate them to precise areas of land;
 - (iv) to provide detailed planning policies for the purposes of development control;
 - (v) to provide a detailed basis for co-ordinating the development and other use of land in the Borough; and
 - (vi) to bring local planning issues before the public.

15. Such plans help to provide local businesses and potential investors with some certainty about likely changes and so assist investment decisions. They are also a means of managing change for the benefit of all who live or work in the Borough.
16. There is a statutory requirement for the Borough Council to “have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan” and that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Further guidance is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 12, entitled ‘Development Plans’ published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions in December 1999 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 1, entitled “General Policy and Principles” (February 1997). Clearly the requirement to take into account all material considerations, means that decisions taken in accordance with the statutory process will sometimes appear to conflict with the Development Plan.

THE STRUCTURE PLAN

17. This Local Plan is based on the policies of the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review (1996-2011). The emphasis is on the regeneration of existing urban areas by the redevelopment of vacant or under-used land. Whilst some development of green-field sites for housing will be necessary across Hampshire, it is intended in Eastleigh to concentrate mainly on re-cycling previously developed land to meet future development needs to 2011 and to do so in ways which will revitalise and refresh our existing urban areas to the benefit of all who live and work in them.

THE MAIN AIMS OF THE LOCAL PLAN

18. This Plan attempts to give effect to a wide range of policies: the County Structure Plan Review; Eastleigh Borough Council’s corporate priorities around the themes of Prosperity; Environment; Health; and the views of our communities which were expressed through community participation exercises relating directly to the Local Plan as well as those relating to the Borough’s Community Plan.
19. In trying to find the best way of resolving all of these issues through the preparation of this Plan, applying the principles of sustainability has been an imperative.
20. Preparing this Plan has been a complex task and it is difficult to summarise its main aims. Nevertheless the list below represents as closely as possible the main underlying objectives. More detailed objectives are listed at the beginning of each chapter:
 - To conserve and enhance the historic environment
 - To continue to improve the range of facilities available in our town and local centres and to improve the environment in those areas
 - To promote a major town centre redevelopment in Eastleigh

- To maintain and encourage local employment without continuing to stoke up demand for more housing
 - To minimise travel demand, especially related to the use of the private motor car and to promote public transport
 - To meet local housing needs in ways which make the best use of previously developed land in order to contribute to the 'renaissance' as well as reducing the need for greenfield development.
 - To conserve the best of our countryside; to improve public access to the countryside and to secure appropriate long-term uses to ensure that regardless of changes in agriculture we will continue to have a thriving countryside
 - To promote the principles of sustainability established at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.
21. It is the Council's expectation that the great majority of new housing will be accommodated in Eastleigh town. Development provides opportunities to significantly re-shape the town. It will help to boost the commercial viability of the town centre and public transport and will contribute to a significant programme of environmental improvements, as well as improved leisure and recreation facilities.

THE TIME SPAN

22. The Local Plan will cover the period up to the year 2011 although it is likely to be reviewed within 5 years from its adoption date.

PLAN PREPARATION TIMETABLE

23. The following table shows the key dates in the preparation of the Local Plan Review.

Vision Paper and public consultation	January 1998
Community Plan consultation	August 1999
Issues Paper distributed	January 2000
Plan placed on first deposit	March 2002
Plan placed on second deposit	May 2003
Public Inquiry on Objections	April – October 2004
Receipt of Inspector's Report	July 2005
Modifications published	November 2005

Notice of Intention to Adopt

February 2006

Formal Adoption

March 2006

MONITORING AND REVIEW

24. The Borough Council will monitor the progress made in implementing the policies and proposals of this Plan. When the need arises the content of the document will be reviewed and in these circumstances the normal statutory procedures, including public consultation, will be followed. Chapter 13 gives more details on implementation and monitoring.