

## **Hastings Planning Strategy Examination Resumed Hearing Session 10 September 2013**

### **Initial Statement by Councillor Peter Chowney - Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration**

Thank you, Inspector, for giving me the opportunity to present a brief initial statement at the start of the resumed hearing session into the Hastings Planning Strategy.

Since the last hearing sessions in February, the Council has undertaken an additional round of consultation, focusing on 3 key issues:

Firstly, the Main Modifications – this is new or amended text in the Planning Strategy. These related to issues such as the Duty to Co-operate, the Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development, changes to the source of housing supply including an increased windfall allowance and separate policies relating to protection of ancient woodland and local wildlife sites, as well as some other amendments

Secondly, we asked the public whether the revocation of the South East Plan affected the Planning Strategy, and what the implications are.

Lastly, we published details of the new Government demographic household projections, and asked for views on their possible implications for housing need and the prospects of meeting them.

Consultation on these issues ran for 6 weeks between 20 May and 1 July 2013. 46 representations were received relating mostly to the Duty to Co-operate and the proposed level of housing provision. Those most significant will be discussed during today's hearing, but after consideration of the comments made, the Council maintains its position that the proposed housing target together with the modifications as proposed represent the most appropriate strategy for Hastings. The Planning Strategy was also prepared with the potential revocation of the South East Plan in mind. After further consideration of housing need, necessitating an update of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), prepared in partnership with Rother District Council, we continue to propose a local housing target of 3,400 homes up to 2028.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment looks at the evidence of housing need considering in turn the need that arises from population growth and the anticipated increase in the number of households; the requirement to provide affordable housing; and the requirement to provide housing at a level consistent with the achievement of economic objectives.

Using 2011-based demographic projections prepared by East Sussex County Council as part of the Update exercise, a demographically driven need for 6,863 (404pa) new homes in Hastings in the period 2011-28 was identified.

This is considered to be the most reliable basis for the assessment of housing need arising out of demographic growth in the area.

The study reinforces that population growth and hence household growth in Hastings and Rother is driven by net in-migration, and not by natural growth. The work undertaken has shown that there are not likely to be adverse consequences if provision is made for these moving households elsewhere in the same quadrant of the Greater South East, so long as the scale of housing needed to meet local economic and housing needs are met. I would like to stress however that Hastings Council remains committed to providing a good supply of high quality, affordable housing, for the many households in our town in inadequate and overcrowded accommodation, those wanting to get on the ownership ladder for the first time, and for those who want to relocate here and enjoy the wonderful quality of life Hastings has to offer. We see that as essential to the regeneration of Hastings, with strategic planning remaining at the heart of our economic regeneration strategy.

As was discussed during earlier hearings, the town faces significant constraints that mean this level of housing need cannot be accommodated within the confines of the Borough boundary alone. Rother District Council is unable to accommodate our deficit within their area and as such, 10 nearby authorities have been approached jointly by Rother and Hastings Councils to see whether they could accommodate the additional housing need. Responses have been received from most authorities and these matters will continue to be pursued under the Duty to Co-operate. It is too early to indicate what the final outcome will be but Rother and Hastings will continue to pursue matters to a logical conclusion.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Council considers that the Hastings Planning Strategy, with the proposed Main Modifications is sound and legally compliant, and full evidence has been presented to support this. We contend that no further Main Modifications are necessary having fully considered the representations received during the recent formal period of public consultation.

The Council and Rother DC will jointly continue to fulfil their requirements under the Duty to Co-operate, and pursue the issue of meeting housing need until a logical conclusion can be reached.

A copy of this Introduction will be made available to the Programme Officer.