
Duty to Cooperate:

Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council

Minutes

Date	Wednesday 7 th July 2021 (14:00-16:00)
Location	8x8

1. Attendance and Apologies	
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2. Update on Local Plans	
	<p>WBC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of proposed Main Modifications (supplemented with Minor Modifications) approved by Cabinet on 5 July 2021 and to be reported to Full Council for approval on 19 July 2021. Submission of Local Plan to SoS is then expected at beginning of August. • Main change to Local Plan from Regulation 19 version is plan start date which is now proposed from submission (2021-2037 [15 years from adoption]). • Revised LDS supported at Cabinet on 5 July 2021. To be taken to Council on 19 July. Timetable for adoption in June 2022. • SOCGs currently being progressed, including a SOCG with landowners of strategic sites and the Highways Agency. SOCG with the EA has been finalised and issues resolved. • Ongoing work also includes finalisation of Heritage Impact Assessments in order to resolve objections from Historic England. <p>TRDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation 18 consultation is ongoing, with recent extension to deadline (end date now 20th August 2021). • Sites included in the Regulation 18 consultation document result in a shortfall below the housing target (1,705 dwelling shortfall). Consideration of representations to the consultation may influence housing numbers in future and recognised that TRDC was still at Regulation 18 stage. • Transport Assessment and Viability Assessment are outstanding evidence base studies but can now be progressed following the publication of the Regulation 18 consultation.

- TRDC intend to engage with Highways England on the Transport Assessment although [REDACTED] raised the issue of lack of previous engagement from Highways England. [REDACTED] advised that TRDC look at Highways England response to WBC's Regulation 19 Local Plan.
- Timetable for Local Plan preparation is still as per adopted LDS.

3. Request for assistance to meet unmet need

- [REDACTED] provided background to the letter sent to WBC in June 2021 regarding TRDC's shortfall in housing and the request for WBC to consider accommodating any of the shortfall.
- [REDACTED] explained that TRDC Officers are aware of WBC's evidence base from previous discussions and from responses to WBC's Local Plan consultations.
- [REDACTED] explained that WBC is currently at capacity in its Local Plan with competing needs for housing, employment and education uses, despite increased densities and studies such as the Tall Buildings Study. Housing requirement includes a 5% buffer. 15% of Watford's housing requirement is proposed to be met through a windfall allowance. [REDACTED] also referred the issue of WBC not having capacity to meet its own needs for industrial uses.
- [REDACTED] advised that a representation to TRDC's Regulation 18 consultation would be prepared in respect of the housing shortfall and TRDC's request for assistance to meet unmet need.
- It was agreed that TRDC would seek to address points raised in WBC's representation to the Regulation 18 consultation.

4. SOCG Strategic Matters

- Housing
Outstanding issue of TRDC's unmet need still to be resolved.

[REDACTED] queried if TRDC would look to include other sites located in the Green Belt. [REDACTED] explained that Officers assumed a certain level of acceptable harm to the Green Belt in the SHELAA, although the final decision on the acceptable level of harm to the Green Belt is a Council decision. An Edge of Settlement Study was also undertaken to identify any Green Belt sites that had not already been included in the SHELAA at the time of the Study. [REDACTED] commented that housing density, particularly in areas that have good access to services in facilities, could be revisited using an approach that applied to site allocations and windfall development.
- Employment
[REDACTED] explained that TRDC's office and industrial floorspace needs could be met in the District through a mixture of existing commitments, an existing allocation (where there is spare capacity) and a new potential allocation for industrial uses (located in the Green Belt).

[REDACTED] explained that WBC have an oversupply of office floorspace, which includes taking on some of Dacorum BC's unmet office floorspace need, but an undersupply of land to meet the industrial floorspace needs.

	<p>Employment section of SOCG to be finalised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Wastewater</u> No outstanding issues – wording relating to wastewater included in draft SOCG. Wastewater section of SOCG to be finalised. • <u>Education</u> Discussion had about TRDC's proposed secondary school allocation in Carpenders Park (CFS11). ■■■ stated that WBC would support provision of the secondary school in this location. ■■■ explained that WBC will have a shortfall in meeting its education needs, specifically in regard to primary education. It was agreed that due to the smaller catchment areas for primary schools, any primary education site in close proximity to the TRDC-WBC boundary would likely still be too far in distance to help in meeting WBC's primary education needs. It was also noted that WBC meeting its education needs would be dependent on the strategy of HCC Education. • <u>Transport (HCC)</u> The MRT project, led by HCC, was discussed. ■■■ explained that whilst the principle of the MRT and sustainable transport is supported, TRDC would be unable to fully commit to any future plans for the MRT without having sight of plans. It was agreed that WBC and TRDC were both committed to working collaboratively on sustainable transport measures. • <u>Any outstanding SOCG matters</u> It was agreed that the SOCG should include reference to the area of Green Belt adjacent to the TRDC-WBC boundary to the north of Hempstead Road/the Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden area, as land in both authority areas has the potential to be released from the Green Belt. ■■■ explained that a greenfield site in the WBC area is identified to be released from the Green Belt. ■■■ explained that the Regulation 18 consultation is consulting on the potential removal of further land around the Warner Bros. area, although specific details are yet to be decided upon and will depend upon representations received.
5.	Next steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBC to send representation to TRDC's Regulation 18 consultation and in response to TRDC's request for assistance to meet unmet need. • WBC to send TRDC comments on draft SOCG with aim of finalising SOCG in the coming weeks • WBC to send DtC meeting dates (inc. issues discussed/actions arising) to TRDC for review

6. AOB

Article 4 Directions

- [REDACTED] queried if WBC were planning to review its existing Article 4 Direction in respect of office/light industrial uses.
- [REDACTED] advised that the 1,500m threshold for PDR to apply to office space conversion reduced the risk to office floorspace supply, although impacts remain unknown. Further consideration will be given to the issue following Local Plan submission.
- Article 4 Directions relating to retail likely to be more of a pressing issue for WBC and work on this will also commence following submission.

Potential Housing Sites - TRDC Reg. 18 Consultation

- Brief discussion on sites located in Carpenders Park (CFS13, CFS14, CFS69a) and Oxhey Hall (ACFS13b) which are close to the WBC-TRDC boundary.
- WBC will be submitting representations in respect of the above sites.