
Duty to Cooperate:

Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council

Meeting Notes

Meeting Details

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| Date | Monday 10 June 2019 |
| Location | Three Rivers District Council |

Attendance

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| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
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| | | Actions |
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| 1. | Introductions and attendance | |
| 2. | Update on Local Plans | |
| | <p>Watford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable: First draft Local Plan (preferred options) consultation in late September 2019 for six weeks. Aiming for publication in May 2020. • Policies will seek to retain and intensify existing employment areas. • Programme of taking policy options to the Planning Policy Advisory Group (internal working group of officers and cross party councillors) has been completed. Policies and site allocation requirements are currently being drafted. <p>Three Rivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable: Publication version of the draft Local Plan to be available for consultation in September 2019. Submission anticipated for May 2020. • Work on potential sites is being progressed with no decisions made to date and what is to be carried forward. • HCC has provided comments on more than 50 sites being considered as part of the Local Plan. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HCC Comet model (transport) has not included TRDC potential sites to date. Next model run results will be in March 2020. • Plan will seek to protect existing employment areas. • A Heritage Asset assessment has been requested by Historic England and will be undertaken. • Final sites for the Local Plan will not be identified until the Green Belt review has been completed (July 2019). | |
| 3. Strategic Sites (and Growth Options) | | |
| | <p>Watford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant progress on strategic sites in Watford except for the preparation of the North Hub Masterplan. Focus on the regeneration of the north part of the town centre the masterplan will be available for consultation in mid July 2019. • Overall strategy is based on sustainability with zones identified across the borough. These zones will define issues such a housing density and parking requirements to make best use of land. • The three housing density zones are 45-70 d/ha, 55-95 d/ha and 95+ d/ha (up to a maximum 350 d/ha). • Site allocations will be supported with special policy areas (e.g. town centre) which will set out policy requirements but not specific numbers. • The HELAA will underpin sites and housing numbers in the new Local Plan. Watford will not be able to meet its housing requirement therefore other measures such as reduced car parking and reduced separation distances in the Residential Design Guide are being revised to make better use of land. <p>Three Rivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth strategy will be based on land being allocated adjacent to existing built up areas. All settlements will be expected to take some development. This does not mean the distribution of growth will be proportional to settlement size. Intensification of existing urban areas will also be part of the new Local Plan. • TRDC Members have been informed that site allocations in the new Local Plan will need to be higher than what they are used to. | |
| 4. Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment | | |
| | <p>Watford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Watford HELAA is almost complete. Starting with 480 sites, the HELAA has refined the number of sites that meet the requirements of the HELAA guidance down to approximately 50 sites. This land will be able to support approximately 6,500 dwellings with another 1,200 accounted for as windfall. • A windfall allowance of 70 dwellings per year has been considered appropriate at present but will be kept under review. • Majority of sites identified through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment are located (HELAA) in the high sustainability | |

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| | <p>area (95+ d/ha). This could have implications for the housing mix that can be delivered in the borough at a strategic level which places increased importance on enforcing housing mix policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant shortfall of land to support new B2 and B8 uses. • 14 sites were put forward as part of a call for sites consultation in 2017. With not enough land available to meet Watford's housing requirement the council has been proactively seeking sites and contacting landowners where the HELAA has identified a site that is potentially suitable for development (housing, employment, other uses). This has involved hundreds of letters being sent out to landowners. • Watford will be revisiting the potential for redevelopment in the Lower High Street area. This area is dominated by retail sheds is some of the most sustainable areas in the borough. • The potential for some low quality open space has been considered for development however it was not deemed appropriate to build on green space when new development will place additional pressure on these areas and there was a corporate objective to improve community facilities and the public realm. • Work on finalising the draft plan still requires further work on the Green Belt and receiving feedback from landowners. • Watford's HELAA methodology has been forwarded to the SW Herts authorities. <p>Three Rivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites taken forward in the draft Local Plan will be based on sustainability. • Three Rivers will not be seeking new sites beyond those put forward in the 'call for sites' consultations. • HCC has requested land be included in the Plan for care services, however, has not the care provider, HCC have not put sites forward. Unable to allocate sites for this use without support of the landowner. • Watford will not release important Green Belt land to accommodate Watford's unmet development needs. • Largest sites in Three River are in Croxley (900 dwellings) and Maple Cross (900 dwellings). • Primary shortfall of employment land will be for B2 and B8 uses. No land has been identified for these uses as they would have to be accommodated in the Green Belt. • Leavesden Studios likely to request the Green Belt land be un-designated. The land has been put forward for an extension to the studio in the current Local Plan so this is not likely to be contested. | |
| 5. Infrastructure | | |
| | <p>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford preparing its IDP following 1-2-1 meetings with infrastructure providers to support the Local Plan preparation. • In Three Rivers, there have been issues with dealing with National Grid. All new housing will be required to have electrical charging points. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SW Herts Water Study is considered to be out of date now and will be resolved in due course. The draft study did not identify any significant issues for the Local Plan therefore any upcoming issues should be able to be resolved in due course. <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watford will probably be able to provide primary schools to support new development, however, discussions are ongoing with HCC as to how their approach to primary school provision can be modernised. Watford will not be able to provide secondary schools to support new growth. This type of need will need to be addressed through collaborative working and consider how school provision in the future can jointly support people living in Watford and Three Rivers. Three Rivers has capacity at present for more students which could support growth in the Three Rivers and the wider area. | |
| 6. Transport | | |
| | <p>Alternative to Metropolitan Line Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watford to protect the designated route as part of the Local Plan. Workshops taking place between vested stakeholders to discuss options that are being put forward. The work is being prepared by Steer Consultants. | |
| 7. Evidence Base | | |
| | <p>Green Belt (Stage II) (TRDC, WBC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft of the joint study to be received in July 2019. <p>Open space Needs Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft study has been completed and is currently being reviewed. This should be finalised later in the summer. Watford has put out a project brief for a Playing Pitch Strategy. The project should be commissioned in early July with completion anticipated in March 2020. | |
| 8. Any Other Business | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Albans DC has published the SW Herts and Retail Study along with the draft Economic Study update on their website unbeknown to the other SW Herts authorities. It was thought that a high level Statement of Common Ground between the two authorities could be useful to highlight issues that need to be considered as part of the Local Plan preparations. | ■ |
| 9. Next meeting | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next meeting to take place in late August with Portfolio Holders invited. | ■ |