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**HORSHAM DISTRICT
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

**HORSHAM DISTRICT
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
TO 2018**

**Facilitating Appropriate
Development**

Supplementary Planning Document

May 2009

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document has arisen from the need to provide 'flexibility' to ensure that there is sufficient housing supply during the life of the existing adopted Core Strategy (2007). The document sets out the requirements against which those planning applications for development, put forward by landowners/ developers as a response to the evolving circumstances, on greenfield and brownfield sites which adjoin defined settlement boundaries in the District, will be considered.
- 1.2** As a set of criteria for judging acceptable development, the policy can be applied to all forms of development, although it is expected that it is likely to be a key determining factor in applications for housing development prior to the adoption of the Core Strategy Review.
- 1.3** It is considered that a more responsive, pro-active way forward is required if the Council is to continue to be in a position to deliver a 5 year rolling supply of housing land as required by Government guidance in PPS3: Housing and to achieve the supply figures in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), the South East Plan. This SPD has been produced as a response to this in light of the issues set out in the 'Background' below. It can achieve that flexibility required by the Inspectors who examined the Core Strategy (2007) and enable the provision of the necessary housing within the District, as soon as market conditions allow.

Background

- 1.4** The background to this policy approach is found in the Report on the Examination into the Core Strategy, where the Inspectors concluded that Policy CP4 'Housing Provision' was unsound as drafted in that it did not provide enough flexibility to enable it to deal with changing circumstances in accordance with Test 9 of the tests of soundness set out in PPS 12, Local Development Frameworks (now superseded by PPS12, Local Spatial Planning) and therefore recommended a suitable 'hook' to enable reserve sites to be included in a subsequent DPD so as not to undermine the Council's fundamentally sound strategy. The final paragraph was thus added to Policy CP4 stating that additional land in the most sustainable locations will be identified through the Site Specific Allocations DPD, or a contingency DPD, to be held in reserve and for its release to be managed through Policy CP9. In response, the Council had concluded that a separate Reserve Housing Sites DPD (RHS DPD) should be prepared as the most appropriate means to address this requirement.



- 1.5** During the preparation of the RHS Preferred Options document, it became apparent that the matter of finding and identifying “suitable” sites was not going to be straight-forward, there was concern that the potential number of homes to be held in reserve was not considered sufficient to make the production of the document worthwhile; this was even prior to consideration of the consultation responses. The analysis of the responses to the identified sites suggested that the list of sites would have to be readdressed, and significantly more work carried out to ensure that a satisfactory evidence base was in place. The timescales involved in achieving the adoption of a sound document were, therefore, set to slip considerably.
- 1.6** Work had also commenced on the Core Strategy Review, and there was a feeling that the Core Strategy Review could catch up or even overtake the RHS DPD given the processes involved. Once the Review is adopted, the DPD would in effect become defunct. The Local Development Scheme Timeline indicates that the Core Strategy Review should be adopted by the end of 2011.
- 1.7** At the same time, government policy appeared to be moving towards identifying housing requirement figures as floors not ceilings (that is, minimum, not maximum requirements), and although not a major factor, this had some limited influence in determining that the production of a RHS DPD was no longer considered the most appropriate way forward. This approach was subsequently removed from the South East Plan at the time of adoption and no longer carries weight. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the increased requirements for homes set out in the South East Plan was going to require the District to provide 13,000 homes in the period 2006 – 2016; 650 per annum which is above the West Sussex Structure Plan figure used as the basis for the Core Strategy (2007) figures. These increased requirements remain in the adopted Plan.
- 1.8** Alongside these issues the economic climate was having a significant impact on development. Government acknowledged the need for innovation and flexibility in light of the challenges of the changing market in July 2008 (‘Facing the housing challenge’). With housing completion figures markedly down in 2007/ 2008, and unlikely to pick up significantly in the immediate future, it was considered that identifying a few specific sites was not the most appropriate course of action when few homes are in fact being built on land already identified. It seemed unlikely that a RHS DPD when produced would be able to deliver the amount of ‘shortfall’ in the timescales, thus casting doubt on the benefit of identifying, and holding in reserve, specific sites.



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Overall

- 1.9** This SPD has been produced as a response to these issues. The approach set out in it aims to be responsive and pro-active within the existing policy framework and should enable the District to continue to be in a position to deliver a 5 year rolling supply of housing land as required by Government guidance in PPS3: Housing. In addition, it can achieve that flexibility required by the Inspectors who examined the Core Strategy (2007) and enable the provision of the necessary housing within the District, as soon as market conditions allow.

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CHAPTER 2: THE APPROACH

2.1 The approach put forward in this document is a criterion based one, which accords with current national and local planning policies and will enable all stakeholders to determine if sites may be considered suitable for development. There are already existing policies relating to sites within settlement boundaries set out in the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents (including CP5 and DC9), so that this document relates solely to greenfield and brownfield sites which adjoin defined settlement boundaries. It is envisaged that the criteria will mainly be applied to housing proposals, although the approach put forward in this document will also allow for the criteria to be applied to other types of development; so that, for instance, there may be potential for additional employment sites to come forward if it appears that the Employment Provision as set out in Policy CP10 of the Core Strategy (2007) is not coming forward as envisaged and where the aims of Policy CP11 'Employment Sites & Premises' can be met. This could also allow for existing employment sites, particularly those which are unneighbourly, in the built up area to be made available for housing, whilst making possible the movement of employment sites to more suitable locations on the edge of settlements, with the possibility of some business expansion.

Deliverable

2.2 Sites put forward under this policy approach should be "deliverable" at the time that the site is put forward for planning permission. In the case of housing, there is likely to be a specific need in the short term; therefore sites should be capable of delivering housing completions within the five year period up to 2013, which is when it seems most likely that housing completions will be low (possibly as a result of an unforeseen delays in the coming forward of the larger, strategic developments and the current economic climate). Those proposing the residential development of a site, therefore, are encouraged to demonstrate a strong desire and willingness to develop it in the short term, with the necessary evidence to back up such statements. This evidence will not only support the proposal, but will enable the Council to resist pressure for development on unsuitable sites, as it can prove that its housing supply requirements are being met. Applicants should be aware, then, that the time limit condition attached to a planning permission may reflect that more immediate timeframe that development is required. Moreover, it is expected that time limits will tie in with the timescale for the Core Strategy Review, so that any subsequent renewal application can be considered in light of the change in circumstances.



Sustainable

- 2.3** A willingness to develop is not, and should not be, the only criterion which governs the permitting of potentially suitable sites. The Council's policies also require that development is in "sustainable" locations. Category 1 settlements are considered sustainable locations, as these are towns and villages with a good range of services and facilities, as well as some access to public transport; they are also deemed capable of sustaining some expansion (see Policy CP5 'Built-Up Areas and Previously Developed Land' of the Core Strategy (2007)). In the case of Category 2 settlements only small scale development within the settlement and minor extensions to the settlement may be permitted providing that they address a specific local need (see Policy CP5); these locations are less sustainable and it seems less likely that sites here will be immediately deliverable due to the requirement to show an identified local need, nevertheless they could be considered if the evidence is available. In both cases any site would be expected to adjoin the defined Built-Up Area Boundary.
- 2.4** In all previous cases where sites have been allocated through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process, they have been subject of a Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). In this case that can not be done as sites are not allocated in the document. There will be the usual tests when dealing with any application, such as highway implications and the proximity of the site to facilities, for example, schools and shops, particularly by non-motorised users. However, it seems appropriate that any new sites coming forward under the existing Core Strategy should also be tested more rigorously against a set of sustainability criteria. A sustainability report, should be submitted with any application using the set of sustainability criteria set out in the Appendix and the method of scoring against them.
- 2.5** It is likely that some sites that come forward have already been tested against similar criteria in the preparation of previous LDF documents. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) will have information relating to this. However, in all cases those seeking planning permission should provide the most up-to-date information and data that they are aware of that relates to the criteria, and may prove useful in assessing the sustainability of the sites. This information will be backed up by the submission of the detailed information normally required to support a planning application.
- 2.6** It is considered that as more sites come forward it will be easier to compare them and assess their position in a hierarchy further enabling the Council to resist unsuitable, or less suitable, development. Those



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sites which come forward first will be the hardest to assess and will set a benchmark for future proposals. It is therefore important that all the necessary information is provided to support any planning application, and that it is detailed and relevant.

Scale

- 2.7** The scale of development will impact on the deliverability and the sustainability of a development. It is, therefore, considered necessary to restrict the size of the development. In terms of housing, small scale developments are preferred and are considered appropriate, as being in line with the Council's existing policy approach. Policy CP8 allows for some small scale development on greenfield sites. It is seen in the Site Specific Allocations of Land (2007) that the largest of the non-strategic sites was for an anticipated 160 dwellings; it is therefore considered that any development would be no greater than around 150 dwellings and most probably less (the largest allocated greenfield site was for around 90 dwellings). Larger proposals would have a greater impact and may prejudice consideration of strategic locations in the review of the Core Strategy. This would not necessarily prevent a small segment of a possible future strategic site coming forward, providing it accorded with all the other existing policy criteria and would not prejudice the future development of the wider area in a proper planned, comprehensive manner.
- 2.8** The size of all developments that come forward under this approach will be considered in terms of their scale in relation to the settlement to which they are attached and should also respect the requirements of Policy CP8 by assisting "in the gradual evolution of the communities by enabling development which meets their needs but does not fundamentally undermine their qualities which make them or their countryside setting unique and special".

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THE APPROACH



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CHAPTER 3: CRITERIA

- 3.1** The preceding chapter focused on the issues of deliverability, sustainability and scale as a basis for the approach to be taken in considering proposals on greenfield and brownfield sites which adjoin defined settlement boundaries. The criteria set out in this chapter must be met for the development on such sites, most particularly on greenfield sites, in order for them to be considered acceptable.
- 3.2** New development may be acceptable, therefore, providing all the following criteria are met:

	Criteria
1.	The site boundary is contiguous (at least one boundary must physically adjoin in whole or part) with an identified Built-Up Area Boundary to accord with policies CP5 and CP8 of the Core Strategy.
2.	Where the site adjoins a Category 2 settlement, evidence of an identified local need justifying the development is provided in accordance with policies CP5 and CP8 of the Core Strategy, and policy DC1 of the General Development Control Policies.
3.	The scale of the development adjoining a Category 1 settlement does not exceed around 150 dwellings, individually or cumulatively, to accord with the aims of the policies CP1, CP3, CP8, CP9, CP15, CP19 and DC9. Any development adjoining a Category 2 settlement would be expected to be of a much smaller scale in accordance with policies CP3, CP5, CP8, CP15 and DC1, DC9.
4.	The impact of the development individually, or cumulatively, around the edges of a settlement does not result in the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements in accordance with policy DC3.
5.	The impact of the development individually, or cumulatively, does not prejudice comprehensive, long term development, in order not to conflict with the development strategy set out in the Core Strategy and/or not to prejudice the review of the Core Strategy.
6.	The landscape and townscape character is protected, and conserved and/or enhanced, in accordance with policies CP1, DC2, DC4, DC9, DC11 and DC12.
7.	Development complements the character of the settlement as defined in the relevant Town or Parish Design Statement, in accordance with policies CP3 and DC9.
8.	Archaeological sites, ancient monuments and listed buildings and their settings are protected, in accordance with national guidelines and policies DC10 and DC13.



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	Criteria
9	The biodiversity of a site is protected, conserved and enhanced where relevant, in accordance with policies CP1 and DC5.
10.	Existing natural features, such as woodland, trees and hedgerows, are retained wherever possible, in accordance with policies DC2, DC6 and DC9.
11.	The site and proposed development is sustainable in accordance with PPS1, PPS3, PPG13, and the Core Strategy (2007) in particular policies CP5, CP8, and CP9. A sustainability report must be submitted with any planning application following the criteria and scoring guidelines set out in the Appendix.
12.	In order to assess and where necessary compare sites adjoining the same settlement, the advice in paragraph 75 of PPG13, that is, the length of short journeys that are likely to be replaced by walking are those under 2km, shall also be used. Sites where it is possible to walk to a wide range of facilities will be considered preferable to sites which are further away and make car journeys into town/ village centres more likely.
13.	Environmental quality is not compromised; appraisal is undertaken as to the effect on water quality, flood risk, pollutants including noise and light pollution, energy sources, sustainable construction and recycling of water and waste, as required by policies CP2 and DC9.
14.	The development is of a high quality, in all aspects, including layout and design, to accord with policies CP3 and DC9. In addition, high standards of sustainable construction are expected as well as the inclusion of renewable and low carbon energy generation where feasible, in order to comply with policies CP2 and DC8.
15	Where housing is proposed there is a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures in accordance with policy CP12; on developments of more than 15 dwellings up to 40% of the dwellings are required to be 'affordable' dwellings, and a mix including smaller units is required by policy DC18.
16.	The proposal does not result in the loss of existing sport, recreational or amenity space unless the criteria set out in policy DC25 are met and the aims of PPG17 are met.
17.	The proposal satisfies the criteria relating to transport and access set out in policy DC40. Note that criteria b of Policy DC40 requires that the development is of an appropriate scale to the transport infrastructure in its location. Infrastructure contributions may be required. A Green Travel Plan will be required for developments that exceed Travel Plan thresholds.
18.	The Council is satisfied that the site is deliverable and sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate this. Applicants must be prepared to accept time limited permissions which have regard to new policy development.



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CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

- 4.1** This Supplementary Planning Document provides greater detail on the Council's current policies in relation to the potential release of additional housing land, and therefore, is in conformity with the Core Strategy (2007). Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy allows for flexibility through the allocation of 'reserve' sites should the housing delivery identified in the Plan falter. This requirement for flexibility provides the policy basis for this document. The document focuses on a pro-active approach to development delivery in light of current circumstances which have changed since the Core Strategy (2007) was adopted. It puts forward an approach and a set of criteria for the release of suitable sites and identifies the ways in which sites will be judged as meeting the spatial objectives set out in the Core Strategy. It does not seek to identify any specific sites or to predetermine the location of any additional sites to be released in the shorter term.
- 4.2** For any queries on this document, please contact a member of the Strategic and Community Planning Department at this Council on 01403 215398, email: strategic.planning@horsham.gov.uk.

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CONCLUSION



APPENDIX: SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

Sustainability Topic	Scoring Criteria
Housing Affordability / Market	-5 → +5. Higher scores should be assigned where development of a site would help to address an identified shortage of affordable homes.
Building Methodology/ Code for Sustainable Homes	-5 → +5. If housing development, Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes is expected; if higher than Code 3 can be given positive score. Other forms of development can be given a positive score if it incorporates a high standard of sustainable construction and includes renewable and low –carbon energy generation, where feasible. For relevant forms of development, positive scores will only be applicable where BREEAM ‘very good’ or excellent’ are achieved or the equivalent under any national replacement assessment methodology.
Services and Facilities	-5 → +5. For a higher score, the site needs be located close to a wide range of services and facilities that are easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport. Points are lost if development of a site would result in a loss of a service or amenity.
Landscape and Townscape Character	-5 → +5. Scores range from zero, where development would not have an adverse effect on landscape and townscape (e.g., a site which has a previous built land use), to -5 where development would have a severe negative effect on the surroundings, for example, harming a protected landscape. It is possible to make a positive impact on the landscape or townscape, for example, by replacing or effectively screening an existing eye-sore development.
Biodiversity	-5 → +5. Scores range from zero, where development would not have an adverse effect on biodiversity, to -5, where for example protected species and habitats would be damaged by the development. A positive score maybe given in exceptional circumstances where enhancement or positive contributions are made to biodiversity.



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Sustainability Topic	Scoring Criteria
Historical Environment	-5 → +5. A score of zero should be assigned where there would be no negative impacts on the historical environment around the site. Negative scores should be given when development would harm the historical environment – e.g. a listed building or Conservation Area. A positive score maybe possible if, for example, the setting of a listed building is improved.
Air Quality	-5 → 0. Negative scores should be assigned when development of a site would be adversely impacted by poor air quality. A negative score should also be given where development of a site would itself contribute to an existing air pollution problem.
(a)Water Quality (b)Water Consumption	(a) -5 → 0. Larger negative scores should be given where development has the potential to harm water quality, for example, through groundwater pollution, proximity to a watercourse, or where sewage treatment works are at capacity. (b) 0 → +5. Positive scores could be given when for example water recycling or rainwater harvesting are incorporated or where sustainable drainage schemes are used to encourage infiltration, reduce run-off etc.
Road /Public Transport	-5 → +5. Good access to the road network will be expected and should score zero where access to public transport is limited. Where access to the road network is poor or no public transport is present, negative scores will apply. Larger positive scores are given for settlements that have better access to public transport, i.e., have a railway station & / or bus services that travel to a wide range of destinations, and where non-motorised users have full access to services and facilities.
Flood Risk	-5 → 0. Sites close to a water course, or specifically identified in the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment documentation as being at risk from flooding, or have the potential to contribute to flood risk themselves should be assigned a negative score.



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Sustainability Topic	Scoring Criteria
Local Economy / Business	-5 → +5. Higher positive scores can be allocated for sites where there is a good range of local employment in or close to a settlement. Where employment provision forms all or part of the proposal this will also attract a positive score. Where there is an overall loss of employment a negative score may apply.
Retail	0 → +5. Higher positive scores should be allocated for sites where there is good retail health and access to a range of shops in a settlement by non-motorised users.

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APPENDIX: SUSTAINABILITY REPORT