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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Mr John Osborne
Hurst Village Society

Via Email

Growth and Delivery
Delivery and Infrastructure
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Dear Mr Osborne,

SUBJECT: CORE STRATEGY, HOUSING REQUIREMENTS AND CIL

I refer to your letter of 15 June to Steve Moore, Director of Place and Growth, in which you request information on the implementation of planning policy and on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Before seeking to answer your specific questions, it is helpful to set out some context. The council's adopted planning policies are set out in the Core Strategy local plan (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery local plan (2014). The strategy established by the Core Strategy local plan sought to focus the majority of development in four major Strategic Development Locations (SDLs). These were planned with supporting infrastructure such as roads, schools, community buildings and district/neighbourhood centres. The strategy established by the Core Strategy local plan was based on a minimum number of homes, which averaged over the plan period calculated as 662 homes a year.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019, requires local authorities to plan for a minimum number of homes as informed by a nationally defined standard method. The standard method currently calculates this minimum number to be 768 homes a year for Wokingham Borough, although this figure changes annually.

The NPPF includes two housing tests, a backward looking Housing Delivery Test which considers completions over the previous three years, and the forward looking five year housing land supply test which considers whether there is sufficient, realistically deliverable sites to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing over the coming five years.

The council's assessment of the forward looking supply of deliverable land is available on our website. The last assessment, based at 31 March 2020, found a deliverable land supply of 5.23 years in spite of the challenges presented by the covid pandemic. There have been no successful challenges to this conclusion.

- Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at March 2020
 - <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=544080>

It is the council's view that the deliverable land supply is not currently dependent on sites which are contrary to the strategy established by the Core Strategy local plan. The vast majority of

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projected completions will occur within the defined settlement limits or in the extent of the defined SDLs. This is not to say that our supply doesn't include supply from permitted developments in countryside locations. Including these sites is entirely reasonable and consistent with legal judgements.

Some Inspectors' in past decisions have concluded that the council's supply at that time was reliant at least to some extent on sites in countryside locations and have concluded that policies which direct the scale of development or define development limits, such as CP09, CP11 and CC02, are out of date as a result. These decisions are based on previous assessments, and not the most recent. The council in its evidence will clarify the supply position, explaining why individual developments have been permitted, e.g. factors relating to the site itself, the achievement of strategic infrastructure, responding to constraints within an SDL.

Notwithstanding the above, whilst some Inspectors' have found individual policies to be out of date, the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, commonly referred to as the 'tilted balance', is based not on individual policies but the 'basket' of the most important policies. In recent years, no Inspector has concluded that the basket of most important policies is out of date and applied the tilted balance. Indeed, Inspectors' have still given significant weight to development limits in exercising their judgement.

As you are aware, the council is progressing work that will put in place a new local plan – the Local Plan Update. This will replace all policies contained in the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans. A Draft Plan was published at the start of 2020 for consultation. Unfortunately, changes in the emergency planning arrangements around AWE Burghfield mean that the strategy proposed by the Draft Plan is no longer considered realistically achievable. Work to assess alternative strategies is ongoing with consultation scheduled for this autumn.

To meet the level of housing required by national policy, any new planning strategy will need to enable new land to come forward for development. Given the nature of the borough, the majority of any new land is likely to be greenfield, being sites on the edge of settlements or sites that enable the creation of a new standalone settlement.

By way of illustration, the Draft Plan proposed the creation of the Grazeley garden town, modest changes to the current SDL, and the allocation of 21 small sites to meet housing needs in addition to completing existing allocations and sites with permission. Around 5,000 dwellings of the supply involved greenfield sites which were not already allocated or had planning permission.

For completeness, the Draft Plan did, and our future plan will, continue to take account of development opportunities within settlements on previously developed land. The majority of these sources are included in our calculations as a small sites / windfall allowance.

Turning to your questions on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Our Infrastructure Funding Statement which is published outlines the 2020/2021 spending priorities. The Capital Programme Appendix D publishes approved CIL / s106 funding to 2024. For your convenience I have provided links below.

- CIL web page
 - <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/community-infrastructure-levy-explained/>
- Approval of S106 and CIL funding 2021/24
 - <https://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s46669/Appendix%20D%20-%20Projects%20funded%20by%20developer%20contributions.pdf>

Twyford centre is only specifically mentioned as it is one of a number of higher town centres that have a different rate for retail than the rest of the borough. Rest of Borough rates, as set out in the Charging Schedule, apply to Hurst.

Hurst Parish Council get transferred any CIL receipts due for CIL liable development that was come forward as per the CIL Regulations. Payments are made in March and October for receipts in the preceding 6 months.

Hurst Parish Council is required to publish, on its website, an annual report on CIL expenditure. There is no requirement to publish priorities but it would be good practice to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Bellinger

Ian Bellinger
Category Manager Growth and Delivery

c.c. Cllr Wayne Smith, Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement