

Mr Phil Drane
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Our ref: TP/100/399/ds
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Dear Mr Drane

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA NEW LOCAL PLAN 2018-2038: DUTY TO COOPERATE UNMET HOUSING NEEDS

As you are aware Southend Borough Council is currently consulting on the first draft of the Southend new Local Plan – issues and options document (2018-2038), closing 2nd April 2019. I write to you concerning the challenge Southend faces in meeting all of its housing needs, which stands at between 18,000 – 24,000 homes by 2038.

With a population of 181,800 in an area of approximately 4,100 hectares, Southend is one of the most densely populated areas outside London. The predominant land use in Southend is residential, interspersed with mature parks and seven miles of foreshore fronting the Thames estuary to the south and east. There are extensive environmental designations covering the foreshore, which is recognised as having international importance for species and habitats. Southend has four areas of metropolitan green belt within its administrative boundary, all of which form a small part of the extensive Green Belt separating settlements within South Essex.

At this preparatory stage the Local Plan does not contain site specific detail or proposed allocations, rather it presents three spatial options on how to address identified need and an appreciation of how many homes may be accommodated, in reference to the Council's Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) (2018). A summary of the options presented is provided below:

Option 1: Development within the existing built up area of Southend on brownfield sites – HLAA suggests 5,200 homes may be accommodated.

Option 2: Most development provided within the existing built up area with some small urban extensions within the Borough – HLAA suggests 10,000 homes may be accommodated, including 4,750 on green belt and greenfield land.

If the Council is able to demonstrate a continuation of past windfall delivery (unexpected sites coming forward) an additional allowance of some 3,800 homes may also be made. Further, as per government guidance, the Council is keen to prioritise brownfield development and will also undertake a housing capacity study to examine the potential to increase housing densities above the HLAA and past windfall rates provided any adverse impacts of doing so would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Taking all these factors into account the two options would produce the following housing delivery for Southend over the plan period:

	Brownfield	Windfall	Total Delivery	Total Housing Need	Shortfall
Option 1	5,200	3,800	9,100	18,000 – 24,000	8,900 – 14,900
Option 2	10,000	3,800	13, 800	18,000 – 24,000	4,200 – 10,200

Figures may not add due to rounding

Clearly options 1 and 2 fall significantly short of meeting the Borough’s identified housing need.

The Southend Borough Council has therefore been working closely with neighbouring authorities within South Essex to determine the extent to which unmet housing need can be accommodated elsewhere within the housing market area.

Initial exploratory growth locations assessment work will form the first step in examining the potential of the area as part of the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan being progressed by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities which will determine the distribution of growth across South Essex.

As part of this approach we have prepared a South East Essex Strategic Growth Locations Assessment (SESSGLA), jointly with Castle Point and Rochford Councils, to understand whether there are areas that could accommodate development of a strategic scale around the urban area of Southend.

The SESSGLA has identified one area around Southend (north of Fossetts Farm, Garon Park and Bournes Green Chase, incorporating land within both Southend Borough and Rochford District) that has the potential to accommodate strategic scale development and therefore warrants further investigation. This is referred to as part of Option 3 in the Southend new Local Plan Issues and Options Report.

The majority of this land is currently designated as forming part of the Metropolitan Green Belt stretching across South Essex to London. It is therefore also being examined as part of a wider Green Belt Assessment which has been commissioned jointly by Southend and Rochford Councils.

As set out in the South Essex Statement of Common Ground the Joint Strategic Plan will provide the statutory mechanism to determine the distribution of growth across South Essex and therefore deal with unmet housing need deriving from individual authorities. However, in line with EPOA’s *Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need* if you would like to meet to discuss any matters arising from the Issues and Options Consultation Document I would be grateful if you let me have a range of dates when you are available to meet and we will make arrangements to come and see you at your earliest convenience.

Copies of the Consultation Document together with supporting evidence base documents are available to view by visiting our website at localplan.southend.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Mark Sheppard
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