

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 1: 18th DECEMBER 2007 **- FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER - PLANNING AND HOUSING **(AUTHOR: Sam Hubbard – Planning Policy Assistant)**

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY 2007

Summary: This Urban Capacity Study (UCS) has been developed to form part of the evidence base for the Preferred Options Consultation on the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. The UCS 2004 study methodology has been utilised and the findings updated in light of permissions secured since the previous survey base date to include any new sites that have been brought to Officers attention in the intervening period. This study finds that an expected capacity of 1772 dwellings can be provided on previously unidentified brownfield land in the five market towns and proposed Local Service Centres in the period up to 2021.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Breckland Council's first Urban Capacity Study for the district was brought to the Council's Policy Task and Finish group in December 2004. The first study outlined initial findings on the potential of brownfield land within settlement boundaries to deliver housing for the period up to 2021 and was the subject of significant consultation on the methodology and findings. This is the third revision to the Urban Capacity Study to be produced and seeks to update, build on, and refine the assumptions made by that first study in 2004. The study will be a key part of the evidence base for the Preferred Options Consultation on the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. The data collected in this study will also be used in the production of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as required by PPS3 which will form part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD Submission document.

2. KEY DECISION

2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters raised in this report fall within the following Council priorities:

- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities

4. URBAN CAPACITY STUDY 2007

4.1 The Urban Capacity Study 2007 (UCS) estimates the number of dwellings that can be accommodated within the settlement boundaries (as defined in the Adopted Breckland District Local Plan (1999)) of the five main towns and candidate Local Service Centre villages. The UCS has considered a number of different sources of potential sites for their capacity to accommodate residential development. These included previously developed land, flats over shops, intensification of existing areas, public and private car parks, conversion of commercial buildings, vacant land not previously developed as well as reviewing other allocations of land that have not been taken up. The sources combined make up the total capacity for the district. It is important to note that land that is identified as open space in the Adopted Breckland

District Local Plan (1999) and the Breckland Open Space Assessment (2007) has not been considered by this study.

- 4.2 The UCS has adopted a simple and transparent approach to assessing the capacity of the individual sites found. This approach utilises a series of 'multipliers' in order to work out the theoretical capacity of each site. By utilising such an approach, the capacity outlined for each site can be seen in a transparent fashion and provides a clear indication of the assumptions that have been used to generate the results. This approach has been consulted on with a number of key agencies including the Government Office, Norfolk County Council and the Home Builders Federation and generally supported.
- 4.3 Since the 2004 Urban Capacity Study a number of the sites identified have been granted Planning Permission for redevelopment for housing. In many cases, the number of dwellings permitted on sites exceeded the potential number identified in the 2004 study. Therefore, this study has sought to use the uplift in numbers on those sites permitted in order to justify applying higher density assumptions on new and existing sites in this study. This approach will aid the accuracy and robustness of the assumptions made by this UCS.
- 4.4 The study estimates that a total of **1772** dwellings can be accommodated on urban capacity sites across the District in the period from 2007 to 2021. 1271 of these dwellings can be accommodated in the five main towns in the District. It is expected that 1532 dwellings will come forward from specific sites and a further 240 from trend-based capacity sources. The study finds that in total, 1198 dwellings will be provided in the period up to 2006-2011, 384 will come forward between 2011 and 2016, and no dwellings from 2016-2021.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Government guidance outlined in Planning Policy Statement (PPS3) advises Local Authorities to carry out Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) to identify land within a district or sub-regional housing market area with the potential for housing development. SHLAAs replace Urban Capacity Studies (UCS) as the best-practice methodology for assessing housing potential. The main differences between a SHLAA and a UCS is that SHLAA look at land outside the defined settlement boundaries of towns and villages, both Greenfield and brownfield. A SHLAA also involves testing the developability and deliverability of identified sites in a much more rigorous way than a UCS.
- 5.2 The data collected in this study will provide the basis for the wider SHLAA study that will be produced in 2008. The SHLAA will be published prior to the submission of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD and will be a key part of the evidence base for this document. A draft methodology for the SHLAA has already been consulted on with County Council, Home Builders Federation, EEDA and the development industry. In the development of the SHLAA there will be further consultation with the development industry to test the deliverability and developability of sites.
- 5.3 In the interim period before a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is completed, this revised UCS nevertheless provides a robust estimation of the potential of sustainably located brownfield land to accommodate housing development in Breckland. Whilst the Study provides an estimation of brownfield capacity it nonetheless provides evidence that the delivery of the LDF spatial strategy will be dependent on releases of greenfield land. This situation is partly the result of an absence of large tracts of brownfield land and also a need to avoid the over-intensification of some sources of previously-developed land (i.e. gardens) in order to protect the form and character of Breckland's towns and villages.

6. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

6.1 This Report is for information only and no options are available.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To allow the successful progression of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Members to note the contents of this report for their information

Appendices:

Appendix A – Urban Capacity Study

This report has no equal opportunities, crime and disorder or human rights implications.

This report does have relevance to Section 40, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.