



## Meeting with Members of Parliament on 26th June 1998

### Hampshire County Structure Plan Review

1. The current Hampshire County Structure Plan deals with the period up to 2001. This is less than 3 years away. Government advice is that Structure Plans should look 10 to 15 years ahead so as to provide a strategic context for Local Plans.
2. Work started on a REVIEW of the Structure Plan to 2011 in 1994. An Examination in Public (EIP) was held in 1996 and the EIP Panel reported in March 1997 (15 months ago).
3. The next formal stage is the issuing of draft modifications to the Plan. This is the responsibility of the 3 strategic planning authorities: Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council, as advised by the "Joint Advisory Panel (JAP). Unfortunately, at the last meeting of the JAP on 22nd May, the 3 strategic authorities were unable to agree the basic provision for housing development over the 2001-2011 period and the process of preparing draft modifications has currently broken down.
4. New Forest District Council (and the other Hampshire District Councils) are extremely concerned about this state of affairs and the resulting delays in progressing the Structure Plan Review. There are 3 particular reasons for concern:
  - The delays in progressing the Structure Plan Review will undoubtedly result in delays in reviewing the District Local Plan (end-date of 2001). This is going to be a major problem in the context of the "plan led system". The District Plan (once adopted) will remain the statutory plan but its strength will undoubtedly be weakened once it is past its end-date, especially as certain policies are likely to be declared "out of conformity" once the Structure Plan Review is finally adopted.
  - We are required by the Government [PPG 3: Housing] "to ensure the availability of five years' supply of housing land, judged against the general scale and location of development provided for in the approved structure and adopted local plans". We cannot do this, in any sensible way, when the approved Structure Plan's end-date is less than 3 years away. We are becoming more and more vulnerable to "planning by appeal".
  - If the 3 strategic planning authorities cannot resolve the problem, then the likelihood is that the Secretary of State will intervene, thus taking the decisions about how much development, and where it is located, away from local Councils. The only basis on which he would be likely to intervene at present would be to impose the recommendations in the EIP Panel's Report, which included many defects.
5. At a meeting on 9th June, out of the 14 Hampshire Local Authorities 11 (including New Forest District Council) stated their support for a "reserved sites" approach to development, whereby provision is made for development to meet the requirement for Hampshire in the current Regional Planning Guidance, but a substantial proportion of new allocations is held in reserve until it is clearer whether they are needed, depending on:
  - whether more scope for development can be found within the existing towns and cities; and
  - whether Hampshire's required housing rate is reduced in the review of the Regional Planning Strategy that is currently underway.
6. The Structure Plan Review programme is already considerably behind schedule. It is vital that a way is found out of the current deadlock and that proposed modifications are issued as soon as is practically possible. It is understood that the 3 strategic authorities are exploring ways of

breaking the deadlock, and an update will be provided at the meeting. If the process is not moving forward, then the District Councils are likely to approach the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and possibly the Minister.

*For further information, please contact: Graham Ashworth, Team Leader (Policy and Plans), Appletree Court, Lyndhurst (01703 285352)*

GRAHAM\ICSPR-MPs\373.22\11.6.98