

**ARUN DISTRICT OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED: SUMMARY PAPER**

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

**1) INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper titled “Arun District Objectively Assessed Need: Summary Paper” is being published alongside the “Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015” evidence base document as part of a six week period of representations on the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) taking place from 24th September to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

1.2 The aim of this paper is to provide information on:

- The Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination Process to date
- The period of representation on the OAN
- The Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015 report
- How to submit a representation

**2) ARUN LOCAL PLAN 2011–2031 EXAMINATION PROCESS**

2.1 The Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (the Local Plan) sets out a vision for the future of Arun up to 2031. It sets the planning framework for the district and will detail planning policy and identify the amount of development proposed and where it should be located. It will be used in the consideration of planning applications. The Local Plan covers the Arun Local Planning Authority Area (LPA). The LPA is Arun District Council administrative area excluding land within the South Downs National Park Authority boundary.

2.2 Arun District Council undertook the statutory Regulation 19 period of representation on the Local Plan between October and December 2014. Subsequently, the Council submitted the Local Plan on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015 for independent Examination to the Secretary of State. Roy Foster MA MRTPI was appointed to conduct the Examination in Public.

2.3 The submitted Local Plan includes an annualised housing requirement figure of 580 which was considered at the time of Submission to represent a reasonable target for housing provision to meet the District’s full Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN). This figure was examined at a Public Inquiry in late 2014 and evidence submitted by the appellants for this appeal included within it their own assessment for

the District's OAN based on more recent demographic data than that contained within the studies the Council had used to determine the OAN which had informed the Local Plan.

- 2.4 The Council sought advice on this matter and was advised that this more up to date assessment of the District's OAN would be difficult to challenge. As a consequence, the Council conceded its position on the OAN for the purposes of that particular appeal.
- 2.5 Officers anticipated at the time that the Council would be invited by the Inspector to comment on the up to date OAN position using the latest demographic (published by the government in February 2015) as part of the Local Plan examination. As a result, an update to the Assessment of Housing Development Needs Study: Sussex Coast Housing Market Area (2014) was commissioned, which identifies the Council's updated OAN to be 758 homes per year.
- 2.6 The Inspector, to make progress with the Examination, held a number of Examination hearings in June 2015 on: Legal and Procedural Requirements; Enterprise Bognor Regis; Littlehampton Economic Growth Area; and the Barnham / Eastergate / Westergate strategic allocation but made a commitment to hold a Procedural Meeting to address OAN matters.
- 2.7 The Council made the decision at its Full Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 to advise the Inspector that it is minded to amend the Local Plan to deliver at least 641 homes per year to go some way to meeting the identified higher OAN figure and commit to review the Local Plan within 2 years of adoption to reflect the updated OAN. This would mean a suspension of the Examination for around 6 months to undertake further work in order to put forward changes to the Local Plan. Other options discussed at this meeting were continuing with the Plan with provision for 580 homes per year; and withdraw the Plan to prepare a replacement Plan addressing an OAN of 758 homes per year.
- 2.8 Following this, the Inspector held a Procedural Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to consider the implications for the progress of the Examination of the new position adopted by the Council on the issue of the OAN. Three options were discussed at this meeting. The options were: suspension of the Examination for 6 months to amend the Local Plan to deliver at least 641 homes per year and a commitment to review the Local Plan within 2 years of adoption to reflect the updated OAN; withdrawal of the Local Plan from the Examination process; and suspension of the Examination for 6 months pending immediate work on providing for a full OAN of 758 homes per year.
- 2.9 The Council received the Inspectors Conclusions following the Procedural Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The Inspector asked the Council to consider the approach and steps that would be necessary to be able to propose modifications to the Local Plan within a suspension period of 12-18 months, with examination of the OAN issue at a resumed hearing as soon as possible, having given the participants a formal opportunity to submit representations about the soundness of the evidential basis of 758 homes per year.

- 2.10 The Council agreed at the Full Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to the principle of a suspension of the Local Plan Examination process for a period of 12-18 months to work towards meeting the higher OAN requirement of 758 dwellings per annum; for Officers to prepare a timetable of work for submission to the Inspector for their consideration; and that a public consultation be carried out on the revised 2015 Objectively Assessed Needs report.

### **3) THE PERIOD OF REPRESENTATION ON THE OAN**

- 3.1 Following the Council's decision on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015, the following documents have been published for a six week period of representation on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September until Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November.

- "Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015"; and
- "Arun District Objectively Assessed Need: Summary Paper".

- 3.2 The period of representation will provide an opportunity for the submission of views about whether the updated housing needs figure, as set out in the "Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015" report (details set out in section 4 below), is a sound evidential basis upon which to base Main Modifications to the Arun Local Plan 2011-2031.

- 3.3 The questions being asked during this period of representation are:

- Do you agree / disagree with Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) figure of **758 homes per year** as set out in the "Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015" evidence base document?
- Please explain why you agree / disagree with the Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) figure of **758 homes per year** as set out in the "Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015" evidence base document. If you disagree, please provide evidence to support your argument.

### **4) THE OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED FOR HOUSING: ARUN DISTRICT, GL HEARN, MARCH 2015 REPORT**

- 4.1 As set out in paragraph 2.5 above, the "Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015" report identifies the Council's updated OAN to be 758 homes per year.

- 4.2 This figure comprises 732 homes based on demographic evidence and an additional allowance of 26 homes per year to help improve affordability over the long term. This is 178 homes more per year than the annualised housing requirement figure of 580 within the Submitted Local Plan. It should be noted that this figure is for the District as a whole and therefore includes an allowance of at least 9 homes per year for that part

of the District that lies within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) (and will therefore be covered by the SDNP Authority (SDNPA) Local Plan). The exact figure is yet to be determined for the SDNPA.

- 4.3 The reasons for the dramatic increase are set out in detail on pages 92 and 93 of the “Objectively Assessed Need for Housing: Arun District, GL Hearn, March 2015” report. However, in summary, the increase can be attributed to a combination of factors, including changes in the rate of household formation and in the methodology used to calculate the OAN of a given area, which means that certain discounts which were applied previously at 100% are now only applied at 50%. Best practice now also dictates that a single figure should be established for the OAN rather than a range, as before.

## **5) HOW TO SUBMIT A REPRESENTATION**

- 5.1 Should you wish to make representations, please do so before 5pm on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Only representations received within this period will be considered by the Planning Inspector at the subsequent hearing session as part of the Examination in Public of the Arun Local Plan (2011-2031).
- 5.2 You are encouraged to make your representations through the dedicated website (<http://arun.objective.co.uk/portal>) or to complete the representation form, available online or at the locations shown below, to help to ensure that your representations can be fully taken into account by the Planning Inspector.
- 5.3 During the period of representation the documents can be viewed online at: [www.arun.gov.uk/local-plan-examination](http://www.arun.gov.uk/local-plan-examination) and at the following locations during normal office opening hours:
- Arun Civic Centre, Littlehampton
  - Bognor Regis Town Hall and
  - All local libraries within the Arun District Council Local Planning Authority Area
- 5.4 There are three ways in which representations can be submitted:
- Preferably electronically on the dedicated website: <http://arun.objective.co.uk/portal>
  - by email to: [localplan@arun.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@arun.gov.uk) using the representation form which is available online at [www.arun.gov.uk/local-plan-examination](http://www.arun.gov.uk/local-plan-examination)
  - by post to: OAN 2015, Planning Policy and Conservation, Arun District Council, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF
- 5.5 **All Representations must be received by 5pm on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.**
- 5.6 For further information please contact the Planning Policy and Conservation Team on (01903) 737500 or email: [localplan@arun.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@arun.gov.uk)