



# Horsham District Council / Waverley Borough Council Statement of Common Ground

## Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040

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### Signatories:

CLlr Liz Townsend Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development	Ruth Fletcher Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure
	

**Dated:** 16 October 2024

### Statement

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#### 1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this statement is to document the strategic cross-boundary matters that have been or are being addressed jointly by the parties, as necessary to demonstrate effective joint working, or to draw out areas of common ground that are specific or unique to the parties.
- 1.2 The matters dealt with in this statement are:
  - Section 2: Housing need
  - Section 3: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
  - Section 4: Transport and Infrastructure
  - Section 5: Water quality including wastewater
  - Section 6: Other matters
- 1.3 This statement has been produced during the preparation of the Regulation 19 stage of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040.
- 1.4 Both signatories to this statement reserve the right to withdraw its endorsement to this statement at any time. If this situation arises, formal withdrawal from the agreement should be set out in a formal written notification to the other signatories to this statement.

## 2. Housing need

- 2.1 It is understood by both parties that Waverley Borough Council (WBC) has made provision to meet all its objectively assessed housing need and has also sought to meet a portion of Woking Borough Council's unmet need through the Waverley Local Plan Part 1 (adopted February 2018) and Part 2 (adopted March 2023) because at the time both LPAs formed part of the West Surrey Housing Market Area (HMA). As the Borough Council adopted its strategic policies (LPP1) 5 years ago, the Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement uses a housing requirement based on the local housing need that is calculated by the standard methodology. The Borough is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply assessed using the standard housing method figure of 710 homes per year (compared to 590 homes per year in the current Local Plan). Waverley Borough Council is in the early stages of preparing a new local plan, and is currently unable to confirm what housing number it may be able to accommodate through their new Local Plan. However, WBC's position is that they will not be able to accommodate any development needs arising from neighbouring areas given the significant environmental, policy and infrastructure constraints that exist.
- 2.2 In respect to Horsham's housing needs, it is understood by both parties that the current objectively assessed need based on the Standard Housing Methodology is 917 homes per year. Horsham District principally falls within the Northern West Sussex HMA together with Crawley Borough Council and Mid Sussex District Council. In addition, a small part of Horsham District falls within the Coastal Sussex Housing Market Area. There is agreement between the Northern West Sussex authorities that the ability for each of the three authorities to meet current housing need (both individually and for the primary HMA as a whole) is becoming more challenging, given environmental and infrastructure constraints.
- 2.3 Brighton and Hove (Coastal Sussex HMA) have also indicated that they have unmet housing needs and are seeking to explore this matter further. In addition, Mole Valley, which is in a housing market with Elmbridge Borough Council, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Kingston, are similarly unable to meet their full assessed housing needs. It has been agreed through a Statement of Common Ground with Mole Valley District Council dated August 2021 that Horsham District is unable to meet their needs.
- 2.4 The starting point for HDC will be to as far as possible meet its own needs based on the Standard Methodology. However in September 2021, HDC received a Position Statement from Natural England. This explained that it could not be concluded that water abstraction at Pulborough was not having an impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site, and that development must not add to this impact. To therefore be compliant with Habitat Regulations, all new development in Horsham District must at the current time be water neutral. This has resulted in a significant fall in planning permissions since late 2021, and an ongoing constraint on development coming forward in an HRA-compliant manner. Consequently, HDC's proposed Local Plan housing target of 777 dwellings per annum (annualised average) reflects that that it is unable to meet its own full assessed housing need nor any additional housing needs from other areas including from within the Northern West Sussex HMA.

2.5 Subject to the evidence of constraints on meeting housing needs, the parties agree that the priority is to meet their own respective needs first, followed by wider housing needs from within the HMAs which they fall within. It is therefore common ground that neither party is in a position whereby it can meet any additional unmet housing needs from one another's respective administrative areas.

### **3. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

3.1 The Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2 provides for identified Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs within the Borough up until 2032, however there is insufficient surplus to be able to accommodate any unmet need arising from Horsham District. In respect to Horsham District, due mainly to the recent definition of Gypsy or Traveller in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), the District will have a shortfall of 58 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (it has no assessed need for Travelling Showpeople provision). Consequently, it is understood respectively by both signatories that neither authority is in a position to assist in meeting the other's Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs.

### **4. Transport and Infrastructure**

4.1 It is acknowledged by both parties that capacity issues identified in the Horsham District Local Plan transport model on the A281, particularly at the A281/B2130 Nanhurst Crossroads, are the results of background growth. Given the amount of committed development in the Alfold and Cranleigh areas, the signatories agree to continue to work together, along with Surrey County Council and West Sussex County Council, to understand any further potential impact arising from traffic growth associated with future local plan reviews in the area.

4.2 The signatories support the principles of HDLP Policy 24: Sustainable Transport, which seek to minimise the need to travel and to maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport use.

### **5. Water Quality including wastewater**

5.1 Waverley Borough Council are in the process of producing a Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to support the review of the Waverley Local Plan, following long standing water supply issues. At the time of writing these were subject to tender submissions, but the timetable includes a requirement for reports in November 2024. Critical to this work is the engagement of water and sewerage infrastructure providers, the Environment Agency, Natural England and adjoining local authorities including Horsham. WBC's position is that these studies, when published, will be a material change in circumstances for WBC.

5.2 The signatories agree to engage over any significant cross boundary issues which are identified as a result of this work.

### **6. Other matters**

6.1 It is agreed that there are no further strategic cross-boundary matters to be addressed between the parties. HDC notes representations made by WBC on details of site allocation policies and notes comments on wider related matters outside of the remit of local plans. Such matters will be dealt with as appropriate through the examination.

**7. Closing matters and further work**

- 7.1 The parties to this statement agree that they have worked jointly and constructively on relevant cross-boundary matters relevant to the plan-making process. The parties confirm that they will continue to do so through sustained joint dialogue and the commissioning of joint studies as appropriate.