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Date	27 November 2018

Wards affected	All	Key Decision	Yes
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Subject	Future Mole Valley Local Plan – local housing need and principles of site selection; and updating the Local Development Scheme.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the revised policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular the requirement that strategic policies should provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, using the standard method (441 dwellings per annum)
2. To agree the methodology summarised in paragraphs 5.7-5.9 and 5.13-5.25 for assessing sites as part of the greenfield preferred options.
3. To approve the revised Local Development Scheme 2018 (annex 1).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Producing a Local Plan is one of the key responsibilities of MVDC as a planning authority. It will play a major role in meeting the needs and aspirations of people who want to live, work, do business and spend their leisure time in the District.

Following the 2017 consultation on issues and options for meeting development needs and the selection of preferred options in November 2017, detailed work has been carried out to explore the potential for meeting development needs over the Plan period. The preferred options take account of other strategies and programmes that are emerging or have been adopted by MVDC, and which have land use implications. The report sets out the work that has been carried out so far, including expected housing delivery from the different options being assessed.

In July 2018 the National Planning Policy Framework was revised, with implications for development of the Local Plan. The report sets out the most important changes and how they impact on plan making and housing delivery.

Although good progress has been made on aspects of the Plan, some delay has built up such that an update is now required to the timetable for progressing the Local Plan. A revised Local Development Scheme is proposed that seeks to strike a balance between

bringing forward the Local Plan as quickly as possible while allowing sufficient time for evidence gathering and Member discussion, and which schedules public consultation in an appropriate period.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

ENVIRONMENT: a highly attractive area with housing that meets local need

- Protect and enhance the natural and built environment through land designations and policies
- In consultation with the community, develop plans for how land is used in Mole Valley, setting out proposals for residential, leisure, and commercial development, which balance residents' needs with protection of the Green Belt
- Pursue policies that encourage the creation of affordable housing
- Work with other agencies to protect the District from the effects of climate change and environmental pollution, paying particular attention to flooding and air quality

PROSPERITY: a vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages

- Continue to drive the transformation of Leatherhead Town Centre and support the market-town culture and economy of Dorking
- Work with rural communities and businesses to build on their unique strengths and address their challenges, helping them thrive and become more sustainable
- Adopt a pro-business outlook across the District addressing infrastructure needs which balance the needs of residents and local businesses

COMMUNITY WELLBEING: active communities and support for those who need it

- Improve opportunities for residents to live safe and healthy lives

The Cabinet has authority to determine the recommendations

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In March 2016, the Council agreed to begin developing a new Local Plan. Initial work focused on gathering evidence to forecast development needs over the 15 year Plan period of 2018-2033; and an assessment of likely supply.
- 1.2 A 'brownfield first' approach has been taken, with the need for new development being met within built up areas or on previously developed land so far as possible. However, it is clear that not all demand can be met on brownfield sites, and it is necessary to explore other options for delivering growth. A sequential approach has been taken looking firstly at options for increasing capacity on brownfield land; then opportunities for meeting demand outside the District; and finally options for the release of greenfield land.
- 1.3 The key issues arising from the evidence and broad options for addressing development needs were consulted upon over the summer of 2017. In

November 2017, having regard to the evidence on demand and supply, and responses from the 'Issues and Options' consultation, the Executive agreed to focus on a number of preferred options for identifying new development sites:

Brownfield Options

- Town centre redevelopment
- Limited reallocation of commercial and retail land
- Mixed use redevelopment
- Targeted increases in suburban densities

Greenfield Options

- Urban extensions
- Expansion of one or more rural village
- Modest additions to rural villages

1.4 Officers are working to develop these options in more detail. As well as identifying sites, work is also going on to develop general planning policies to address generic issues and develop supporting documents, such as an infrastructure delivery plan, to underpin the Local Plan.

1.5 While residential development is the largest and most pressing of the development needs forecast over the plan period there are also other development needs that need to be accommodated. The Plan will therefore include opportunities for commercial (industrial, office and warehouses), retail, leisure and entertainment uses.

2.0 Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

2.1 National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF was revised in July 2018. Among the changes made were three that are important for plan making in Mole Valley.

Meeting objectively assessed need

2.2 Firstly, national policy for plan making¹ has been amended to give greater emphasis to meeting objectively assessed need, particularly for housing, and also need that cannot be met in neighbouring areas. It states that:

- *plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;*
- *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be*

¹ NPPF paragraph 11.

met within neighbouring areas, unless:

- i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area²; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.*

Standard method for calculating housing need

- 2.3 Secondly, to determine the minimum number of houses needed (termed 'local housing need'), the NPPF has adopted a standard method of calculation. This standard method has replaced the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) undertaken in 2016. Using the standard method, the annual local housing need for Mole Valley is now **441 dwellings per annum** (6600 dwellings over the 15 year Plan period³). This represents an uplift of 13% compared to the forecast of 391dpa under the SHMA. It will require a built out rate over twice that needed to achieve the current housing target in the Core Strategy of 188dpa.
- 2.4 The standard method of calculation in part uses national household growth forecasts to determine local housing need. The household growth projections are updated every two years and a new dataset was recently published in September 2018. Largely because of changes to the way the dataset was calculated, household growth projections have reduced significantly. Because this would have a significant effect on local housing need, the Government has already indicated that it intends to amend the standard method of calculation to ensure that its objective of significantly boosting housing supply continues to be met. The amended standard method of calculation is awaited but is expected to be published by January 2019 at the latest.
- 2.5 For the Local Plan to be found sound, it has to conform to national policy, in particular the requirement to meet objectively assessed need as a minimum unless there are justified reasons for not doing so. Work on identifying sites to deliver local housing need over the Plan period is proceeding on that basis. Plan making is continuing on the assumption that local housing need will continue to be around 441dpa, with any necessary adjustments being made once the revised standard method is published.

Exceptional circumstances for release of Green Belt

- 2.6 Thirdly, more detailed guidance has been provided on when Green Belt should be released.

² NPPF footnote 6. The policies referred to include: habitats sites, Green Belt, Local Green Space, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, irreplaceable habitats (eg: ancient woodland), designated heritage assets, and areas at risk of flooding.

³ Using 2016 household projections.

- 2.7 The NPPF continues to assign strong protection to the Green Belt. Once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, and then only as part of the review of a local plan. Exceptional circumstances will only exist where a planning authority has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting identified need for development and there remains unmet demand. In particular a strategic plan will be expected to have examined the following options:
- 1) make as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land
 - 2) optimise density of development, particularly in town centres and other locations well served by public transport
 - 3) be informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need
- 2.8 The plan making process following by Mole Valley accords with this guidance. The 'brownfield first' approach outlined above seeks to make the most effective use of brownfield land within Mole Valley. The brownfield options seek to further develop the use of brownfield land, including increasing density and making more use of land in or close to town centres and/or areas around main railway stations. Engagement with neighbouring authorities indicates that they are unlikely to be able help meet demand. It follows that, with a residual unmet housing demand, exceptional circumstances do exist and it will be necessary to investigate amending the Green Belt. The preferred greenfield options develop this theme in more detail.

3.0 Housing Delivery

- 3.1 Development to meet local housing need of 6600 dwellings over the Plan period is planned to be delivered in the following ways.
- 3.2 Development on brownfield land – 2900 dwellings. This form of development is made up from a number of different sources including existing planning permissions, previously developed land with potential for redevelopment, an allowance for windfall sites, and allocated housing sites in the existing Local Plan that have yet to be developed. A summary of brownfield sites is contained in the Brownfield Land Availability Assessment June 2017⁴. The capacity of brownfield land is constantly changing as existing sites are developed and new ones become available. The Assessment will need to be updated prior to submitting the Plan for examination.
- 3.3 Maximising brownfield capacity – 1200 dwellings. The four preferred brownfield options – town centre regeneration, reallocating employment land, mixed use development, and increasing suburban densities - will all help deliver additional housing capacity within existing built up areas or on previously developed land. The additional capacity will need to be justified by reference to individual sites or clearly defined policies and this forms part of the work being carried out to

⁴ Published at www.futuremolevalley.org

demonstrate such capacity as part of the draft Plan.

- 3.4 Notwithstanding the above housing delivery on brownfield land, there would remain an unmet housing need of some 2500 dwellings. Site allocations to meet this housing need, including a buffer to allow for flexibility in housing delivery and to adapt to rapid change, will be sought primarily under the greenfield preferred options of urban extensions and/or the significant expansion of one or more village.
- 3.5 The third greenfield preferred option - modest additions to rural villages – while contributing towards housing need is principally aimed at improving community resilience by providing small additions to the rural housing stock where appropriate. Parish councils and village associations have been asked to work in partnership with Mole Valley in identifying suitable sites.
- 3.6 Neighbouring authorities further ahead in their plan making activities have had to tackle similar issues to that facing MVDC, in particular whether to meet objectively assessed housing need and the release of greenfield land.
- 3.7 In none of the districts have these been easy decisions to make. In some cases initial attempts to form a plan without releasing greenfield land despite there being unmet demand were rejected at examination (Waverley Borough Council) or pre-examination meeting (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) by local plan inspectors. Both authorities had to reassess their approach and revise their plans to include greenfield releases. Other Surrey authorities are currently consulting on plans which include greenfield releases (Guildford Borough Council, Tandridge District Council and Woking Borough Council).
- 3.8 Prior to publication of the original NPPF in 2012 (and for a short while afterwards), some authorities were able to adopt plans that did not fully meet their objectively assessed needs (for example Woking Borough Council and London). With Government policy now firmly set on boosting housing supply, those early decisions have had consequences for their neighbouring authorities. For example Waverley was not only required to meet its own housing need, but has had to accommodate an element of Woking and London's unmet need. Guildford has also had to accommodate part of Woking's unmet need.

4.0 Brownfield Options

- 4.1 Four brownfield options for accommodating new homes are being investigated in more detail. A number of these options also provide opportunities for meeting other development requirements, for example commercial and retail space.

Town Centre Redevelopment

- 4.2 This approach involves delivering higher density development on sites in town centre locations. The greatest opportunity lies in Leatherhead town centre, where MVDC is already exploring the potential for redevelopment as part of the Transform Leatherhead programme. The freehold purchase of the Swan Centre by MVDC emphasises its commitment to improving the town centre with a wider range of retail, commercial, entertainment and residential uses. Other sites,

including Bull Hill and Clare House and James House, will accommodate carefully sited buildings of contemporary design to a high quality. Redevelopment will include significant improvements to landscaping and the public realm providing an attractive environment in one of the most sustainable locations in the District.

- 4.3 Because of the complexity of the Transform Leatherhead programme much of the detailed design will need to take place after adoption of the Local Plan. Given the different timescales, such detailed layout and design would be more appropriately guided in a separate area action plan that could follow on. It will however be necessary to establish the overall scale of development and the range of uses that will be delivered through the Transform Leatherhead programme, so that they can be taken into account in meeting the wider development needs of the District.
- 4.4 Opportunities for town centre redevelopment are much more limited in Dorking. The Dorking Town Centre Transport Study, which is nearing completion, indicates that little additional capacity can be achieved within the current road network, and that most options for mitigating congestion rely on 'softer' approaches by encouraging the use of walking, cycling or public transport. There may be better development opportunities around Dorking Station and these will be explored as part of the Local Plan.
- 4.5 Smaller neighbourhood centres do not offer the same opportunities for town centre redevelopment, although higher densities proportionate to their size may be an option to explore (see the increasing suburban densities option below).

Limited Reallocation of Commercial and Retail Land

- 4.6 Forecasts of demand for future employment floorspace indicate that there will be a small surplus of commercial and retail land over the plan period, which could be reallocated to provide additional housing.
- 4.7 It is necessary to ensure that sufficient employment land is safeguarded to maintain the continued economic health of the District, and provide flexibility for changes in commercial and retail needs over the plan period, in support of the Council's Economic Prosperity Strategy. To that end the Council has adopted an Interim Policy Statement on Employment Land, which sets out principles for identifying which employment land should continue to be safeguarded for commercial purposes, and where opportunities might lie for reallocation. Work is ongoing to identify the quantum and location of such sites.

Mixed Use Redevelopment

- 4.8 This approach focuses on redeveloping underused sites to provide a mix of uses at a higher density in a more efficient manner. One example of this approach which has been discussed in some detail is the redevelopment of the civic area around Pippbrook in Dorking, although no firm decisions have yet been made that could be included in the draft Local Plan.
- 4.9 The difficulty with planning for mixed use development is the availability of sites,

and the willingness of landowners to consider redevelopment, often in cases where there is an existing use operating on the site. These factors have made it difficult to identify specific sites. It is likely that if this particular preferred option is taken forward in the Local Plan, it will have to be through enabling policy rather than by site allocation.

Targeted Increases in Suburban Densities

- 4.10 The revised NPPF advises that planning authorities should support development that makes efficient use of land, and that plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land, including minimum density standards for town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. Achieving appropriate densities is especially important where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs.
- 4.11 Mole Valley contains a number of areas of low density housing. These areas are valued by their residents for their high level of residential amenity. For the most part, existing policies require development within them to respect the existing character of the area delivering similar sized dwellings, albeit typically on smaller plots.
- 4.12 Two and three bedroom dwellings are seen as a priority to re-balance the housing mix in some of the suburban areas. The new Local Plan will consider policies consistent with supporting this rebalancing, which will lead to a targeted increase in density in some locations. Policies might concentrate smaller units around neighbourhood centres and/or a proportion of smaller units on any housing sites brought forward.
- 4.13 It is considered that a targeted approach to increasing suburban densities can be achieved without a loss of amenity of character if addressed in a sensitive way. There is an opportunity through the Local Plan to build on work done by others taking account of experience gained through recent development.
- 4.14 One other trend that has taken place over the years is the redevelopment fronting the main road network in these areas. Redevelopment has generally continued the pattern of large buildings in spacious grounds, but divided into a number of apartments rather than single dwellings. The same form has been followed by retirement schemes. It is considered that this form of development is a further opportunity for increasing densities while limiting the impact on the lower density residential estates lying behind the main road network.

5.0 Greenfield Options

- 5.1 The residual unmet housing demand, taking account of forecast demand and identified supply on brownfield sites, is approximately 2500 dwellings. The preferred options being explored in more detail to achieve strategic-scale housing development on greenfield sites are: urban extensions; and the significant expansion of one or more village. The third greenfield preferred option - modest additions to rural villages – will contribute towards housing growth but is primarily aimed at improving community resilience.

Urban Extensions

- 5.2 This option would involve significant expansion of one or more of the larger built up areas in Mole Valley – Dorking, Leatherhead, Bookham, Fetcham and Ashted. It would create one or more new residential neighbourhoods, together with the roads and other infrastructure necessary to support the new population. Depending on size and location, urban extensions may include other uses, such as a neighbourhood centre, and ancillary open space.
- 5.3 In terms of accessibility, limiting impact on the Green Belt, and proximity to services, there is a strong argument in favour of urban extensions as an option for delivering large-scale housing.

Expansion of One or More Rural Village

- 5.4 This option would involve the significant expansion of one or more villages in the rural area of Mole Valley. A village expansion of this nature would provide significant housing development but would inevitably substantially change the scale and character of the village. Services and transport links would be based on the original village centre, but would need to be significantly enhanced to support the new housing.
- 5.5 Expanding one or more rural villages would be a significant change in the planning approach taken in the District over the last few decades. It would give rise to a range of challenges including integration with an established community, impact on the countryside and provision of infrastructure.
- 5.6 While not underestimating these challenges, they are equally applicable to most large-scale housing development, including urban extensions. One of the biggest differences between an urban extension and a village expansion, is that with a village expansion new residents would have to access higher order services by travelling to towns or larger urban areas. The need to maximise the sustainability of such a development is therefore a key factor and would limit locations to those villages with good road and rail links, or where such links could be provided as part of the development.

Methodology for Identifying Greenfield Sites

- 5.7 It is important that a consistent and objective approach is used to identify possible greenfield sites. For that reason, the same method will be used to assess urban extension and expanded village sites, with the analytical process picking up the differences between urban and rural options, including relative levels of accessibility, landscape impact and availability of public services.
- 5.8 A greenfield call-for-sites was carried out between December 2017 – February 2018, in which landowners and developers were able to indicate land that was available for development. These sites will be subject to analysis using the following method:
1. Assessment of Strategic Fit – each site is assessed on whether it is consistent with one or more of the preferred development options chosen by

the Council

2. Constraints Analysis – each site is assessed against recognised national and local constraints that preclude strategic-scale development. The constraints are set out in more detail in supporting evidence⁵, and include designations such as:
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Areas of Great Landscape Value
 - Special Area of Conservation
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Land at risk of flooding
 - Common land
 - Inalienable land (National Trust)
 - Land subject to Aircraft Noise (Gatwick)
 3. Green Belt Review⁶ – each site within the Green Belt is assessed against the extent to which the area in which it lies fulfills the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the NPPF.
 4. Sustainability Appraisal – each site is assessed against sustainability objectives which have been agreed by all East Surrey planning authorities⁷ to ensure consistency and meet statutory requirements⁸. The sustainability appraisal assesses each site against a range of economic, social and environmental objectives under the following headings:
 - Housing
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Historic and cultural assets
 - Travel and sustainable transport
 - Making best use of previously developed land
 - Economic growth
 - Employment opportunities
 - Greenhouse gas emissions and low carbon economy
 - Using natural resources prudently
 - Climate change
 - Flooding
 - Water
 - Land contamination and soil quality
 - Air quality, noise, and light pollution
 - Landscape character
 - Biodiversity
- 5.9 The result of this ‘sieving’ process will be to identify strategic-scale sites that may have potential for development.

⁵ Constraints Analysis, May 2017.

⁶ The Green Belt Review will be published with the draft ‘preferred options’ Plan

⁷ The East Surrey authorities are: Mole Valley District Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Tandridge District Council

⁸ Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

Modest Additions to Rural Villages⁹

- 5.10 Separate to the two greenfield options for strategic-scale housing described above work has also been carried out to develop the preferred option of modest additions to rural villages. The purpose of allowing modest housing development is not so much to meet wider housing demand, although it will contribute towards that aim, but more to support the social vitality of the villages. It is the case that many villages in Mole Valley have had little if any development for many decades. A small increase in population, particularly of younger people or families, could help community resilience in villages which are experiencing an ageing population and the loss of services. This option also supports an objective in the Mole Valley Rural Community Strategy for providing rural housing.
- 5.11 All parish councils and village associations were visited by officers during January-February 2018 to explain the purpose of the preferred option and invite them to work in partnership with MVDC in shaping future development in their villages. They were visited again during July-September 2018 to discuss initial ideas to enable modest development in villages, including new or amended village boundaries, inseting areas of land from the Green Belt, and allocating sites for housing.
- 5.12 Details of the ideas discussed with parish councils and village associations are available to view¹⁰. These follow a consistent approach to making modest additions focused on settlements that are or could be defined as villages in Mole Valley.

Methodology for Identifying Potential Modest Additions to Rural Villages

- 5.13 Each village has been reviewed to assess the scope for modest additions or expansion in one or more of the following ways:
- Define a new boundary around village that is currently undefined
 - Extend existing village boundary
 - Inset compact areas of development within a village boundary
 - Allocate small sites for housing in or adjacent to a village boundary

Defining new or extending village boundaries

- 5.14 Village boundaries have been drawn having regard to the compact, substantially developed areas of each settlement. Boundaries exclude low density residential areas and isolated or loose knit groups of dwellings, even if they are on the edge of more compact development. Occasionally there may be more than one

⁹ 'Modest additions' in the context of this preferred option is a matter to be determined for each village depending on individual circumstances and the ambitions of the community. Additions are not expected to be of a size that would alter the character of a village or place significant additional pressure on local infrastructure. Where site allocations have discussed with parish councils and village associations, these have generally been of the order of a 5-10% increase in dwellings within a village.

¹⁰ www.futuremolevalley.org/modestadditionstoexistingvillages

substantially developed area to a village, which may be defined with separate boundaries.

- 5.15 There are some smaller villages in Mole Valley that do not exhibit any compact or substantially developed areas of development and therefore have no defined village boundary.
- 5.16 National planning policy advises that village boundaries should be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Some changes have been proposed to realign settlement boundaries to follow defined features on the ground where possible. There may be some curtilages, particularly on the edges of villages where that is not appropriate and which will be judged on their own merits.

Insetting from the Green Belt / countryside

- 5.17 In the Green Belt, national planning policy guidance specifies that villages whose open character makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt should be included in the Green Belt. In all other cases, villages should be inset (removed) from the Green Belt. Particularly important or special characteristics of a village can be protected through other means, for example a Conservation Area. This guidance has been taken into account in deciding whether it should be proposed that land within a village boundary should be inset or continue to be washed over by the Green Belt or countryside.
- 5.18 On land within a village boundary which is also inset from the Green Belt / countryside, limited residential development is allowed in principle. 'Limited residential development' includes development constituting more than just infilling, including development in depth.
- 5.19 On land within a village boundary which is washed over by the Green Belt, infilling only is allowed. "Infilling" is defined as the development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage, or the small scale redevelopment of existing properties within such a frontage.
- 5.20 In some cases a village may exhibit varying characteristics that mean that within the village boundary some parts are inset and other parts continue to be washed over by the Green Belt or countryside designation.

Allocating Sites for Housing

- 5.21 Sites that have the potential to accommodate additional housing have been identified in the work carried out so far. In all cases these sites are within or adjacent to a village boundary. One advantage of allocating sites in the Local Plan is the type and scale of development can be more closely defined through accompanying policies.
- 5.22 Housing sites that fall outside a village boundary have been excluded from the site assessment process that has been carried out as they would fail Green Belt/countryside policy and be inconsistent with the approach described above. Policies allowing the redevelopment of previously developed sites in the Green

Belt/countryside will continue to apply.

- 5.23 The detailed form of residential development on sites which may have development potential has yet to be determined, but the size, type and tenure of houses will be informed by discussions with parish councils and village associations. A proportion of affordable housing in accordance national and local planning policy will be sought on these sites.
- 5.24 There may be more than one allocated housing site proposed in a village. In some cases these can be considered in combination or as alternative options.
- 5.25 Proposals to define new or extend existing village boundaries, inset land from the Green Belt and/or allocate sites for new village homes will be consulted on as part of the Local Plan. The consultation proposals will be informed by the feedback that has been received from parish councils and village associations following discussions with them as described in paragraph 5.11 above. The views of parishes and associations will be published as part of that consultation.
- 5.26 It was decided to seek the views of parish councils and village associations specifically at an early stage in the process, ahead of the public consultation on the draft 'preferred options' Plan. The reason for doing so is that parish councils do now have a greater role in the planning process. The revised National Planning Policy Framework promotes the involvement of local communities in plan making, for example through neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders, working in combination with the strategic policies of the planning authority. In Mole Valley there are also parishes who, while not having a neighbourhood development plan, would like to work with MVDC to deliver local aspirations for development.

6.0 Next Steps

- 6.1 Work is progressing on the assessment of sites¹¹ to meet development needs over the Plan period. Detailed negotiations are required with land owners and/or developers to determine whether specific sites are available for development in principle, suitable for the type of development proposed, and viable having regard to site constraints and planning requirements.
- 6.2 In parallel to this work, discussions are required with infrastructure providers to determine what additional infrastructure is required to support housing growth of the scale envisaged. As part of the assessment of infrastructure requirements, County Council officers are carrying out District-wide transport modelling work to better understand the impact of different development options.
- 6.3 The Plan will include policies on other aspects of development, including affordable housing provision, development management policies, gypsy and traveller site provision, parking and technical standards, and a whole plan viability assessment. Additional evidence required to support these policies is being gathered at present.

¹¹ They include brownfield and greenfield sites as well as those sites that would constitute modest additions to villages.

6.4 Decisions about which sites¹² should be allocated for new homes in the Local Plan will be made by Members in the same manner as decisions on other land allocations and policies in the draft Plan. Those decisions will need to be based on evidence and made within the context of the preferred options for the location of new development, as explained in paragraph 1.3 above. Decisions on which sites to select will need to be justified and consistent across all sites.

6.5 The Council will consult widely on the draft Plan, including all those who live or work in the area, and take account of views expressed in deciding whether to change or modify the Plan. Further explanation of this process, and the opportunities for residents to voice their views, will be provided on the Local Plan website at www.futuremolevalley.org.

7.0 Local Development Scheme

7.1 The timetable for progressing the Future Mole Valley Local Plan is set out the Local Development Scheme (LDS)¹³. This was last updated approximately a year ago. Good progress has been made on some of the detailed work needed to advance the Local Plan but delays to parts of the work programme have meant that the timetable will have to be modified. In particular, it is desirable to schedule public consultation on the draft 'preferred options' Local Plan so that it does not run exclusively over the main public holiday period or interfere with the election period. It is also necessary to strike a balance between progressing the Plan in a timely manner while allowing sufficient time for evidence gathering and debate amongst Members. The Cabinet wishes to involve all councillors in reaching a decision on the draft Local Plan and will seek to use existing working group meetings and/or seminars as well as the formal reporting process in providing opportunities for discussion. Although there is no constitutional requirement for Council to approve the draft Plan prior to consultation, the Cabinet is minded to seek approval in this case because of the wide ranging nature of the Local Plan.

7.2 For those reasons, it is recommended that the LDS be updated to reflect the new timetable (see annex 1). This will help local communities and interested parties to keep track of progress on the Local Plan and anticipate opportunities for engagement. There remains strong pressure on local planning authorities to develop and adopt local plans in a timely manner, with the Government reserving powers to intervene if that is not done. The revised LDS will demonstrate MVDC's continued intention in adopting a Local Plan in a realistic and planned manner.

7.3 The evidence underpinning the Local Plan will also be used to support revision of the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule. The timing of this document has been accordingly adjusted and is included in the revised LDS.

8.0 Financial Implications

¹² These will include brownfield sites and greenfield sites including any modest extensions to villages

¹³ <http://www.molevalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=29392>

- 8.1 Funding of the Local Plan review had been budgeted as part of the Planning Department's work, including additional one-off funding for consultant support made in the 2017/18 financial year. Further one-off funding will be required for the examination in 2018/19 and has been built into the medium term financial plan.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The form and content of development plan documents and consultations on them are subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 9.2 The revised Local Development Scheme has been prepared to meet the requirements of Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). To meet the legal requirements, the local planning authority must resolve that the scheme is to have effect and in the resolution specify the date from which the scheme is to have effect. The wording of the recommendation reflects these requirements.

10.0 OPTIONS

- 10.1 The options are:

- To agree the recommendations (recommended)
- To plan for less than the objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses
- To agree an alternative methodology for assessing sites as part of the greenfield preferred options for development
- To agree an alternative timetable for progression of the Local Plan

11.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Monitoring Officer commentary – The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

S151 Officer commentary – The s151 Officer confirms that all relevant financial risks and implications have been taken into account.

Risk Implications –

Failure to meet objectively assessed housing need, as determined using the standard method, would risk having the Local Plan found unsound on examination.

Failure to use a robust method for assessing potential development sites that is consistent with existing designations and national planning policy would

undermine the selection process, is likely to lead to more challenges to the Plan, and would risk the Local Plan being round unsound on examination.

An alternative timetable for progressing the Local Plan could, if quicker, lead to publication of a Plan that was incomplete or lacking supporting evidence, and insufficiently debated by Members. If the alternative timetable was longer than recommended, without good reason for delay, may risk the Government intervening to impose a plan.

Equalities Implications – Not required at this stage. An equalities impact assessment will be carried out as necessary on the future draft Plan.

Employment Issues – None for MVDC. Selecting strategic options for development will affect wider employment opportunities in the District over the life of the plan.

Consultation – Statutory requirements for consultation are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012. Targeted consultation has take place during preparation of the preferred options plan, to inform development (for example a call for development sites, and liaison with parish councils on modest extensions to villages). A full public consultation will be carried out following publication of the draft ‘preferred options’ draft Local Plan.

Communications – see consultation. The revised Local Development Scheme will be published on the MVDC website.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annex 1 – Local Development Scheme 2018-2020

Evidence documents that have been published may be found at www.futuremolevalley.org. All other evidence documents will be published at the same time as the draft ‘preferred options’ Local Plan.