

Report on the available options to meet the shortfall of 300 dwellings, if the Council deletes the proposed Core Strategy Growth Location north of Forest Road.

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Background Papers: One District-One Vision Draft Core Strategy
Financial Implications: No
Equalities Implications: No
Legal Implications: No
Options: To note the contents of this report.
Risks: N/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out options which the Panel will need to consider at the next meeting, on July 29th, if the Council resolves to delete the Forest Road growth location from the draft Core Strategy.

Recommendation
To note the contents of this report.

Background

Members of the Panel are recommending that the Council should delete the proposed growth location north of Forest Road, in the Parish of Rivenhall, from the draft Core Strategy. This recommendation will be considered by the Council on 22nd June.

This growth location was intended to provide around 300 dwellings, community facilities (including local shops) and open space.

Officers have re-examined the amount of dwelling capacity that could be provided within existing settlements on sites identified in the urban capacity study, in the residential land availability study and as part of the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which is in course of preparation.

It is considered that the shortfall of 300 dwellings, in the housing requirement set out for this District in the East of England Plan, cannot be made up from these sources. This is as a result of two factors:-

1. The Core Strategy plan period has been extended to 2026, to provide a 15 year plan period from date of adoption, which has already increased the housing requirement by 385 dwellings.
2. Many of the sites identified within the main towns are likely to come forward with lower housing densities than had been predicted earlier in the above studies. This is because the recession has affected the market for flats, more than the market for family housing.

If the Council resolves that the Forest Road growth location is deleted, it will be necessary for the Panel to consider the following options:-

A. To increase the amount of housing provided at the remaining growth locations at land west of Panfield Lane, Braintree and/ or at land at Lodge Farm, Witham. This will require further discussions with the highways authorities to establish whether there is highways capacity for this expansion.

B. To consider alternative growth locations –set out in the One District-One Vision Technical Supplement as amber sites. These comprise:-

- Land north of Conrad Road, Witham
- Land east of Broad Road, Braintree
- Land west of Pods Brook Road and east of Pods Brook Road, which are now jointly part of the Flich Way Settlement proposals
- Land west of Springwood

There is likely to be a need for public consultation on an alternative growth location, if this is selected, which would delay the submission date of the Core Strategy by approximately three months.