

Proposed Submission Core Strategy

Event Name	Proposed Submission Core Strategy
Comment by	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (Ms Nicky Linihan)
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Legal compliance

Do you consider the DPD is legally compliant? Yes

Soundness

Do you consider the DPD is sound? No

Unsound

Do you consider the DPD is unsound because it is not: . (2) Effective

Reasons for compliance and soundness

Please give details of why you consider the DPD is not legally compliant or is unsound. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the DPD, please also use this box to set out your comments.

The East Kennet Valley area in the south-east of the West Berkshire Council area has a close relationship with town of Tadley, which lies immediately south of, and abuts, the West Berkshire border and the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). Policy SP6 identifies growth in the East Kennet Valley for 800 homes; the borough council therefore wishes to make comments in respect of the growth planned in this area in relation to the AWE and the approach to monitoring housing completions and population levels and to infrastructure and service provision.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) initially objected to residential development in Tadley (within Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's boundary) when they were consulted on a planning application (ref: BDB/67609) for 115 dwellings at the Boundary Hall site in December 2007. Since this consultation, the HSE's position has been to 'advise against' all planning applications that are likely to result in an increase in population within the 'inner' zone (0-3km) of the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ). The DEPZ covers the areas of Tadley and Baughurst, as well as the settlement of

Aldermaston which lies within the West Berkshire administrative area. The borough council is of the view that thorough consideration should be given to this issue given that the DEPZ covers much of the East Kennet Valley area identified in the Proposed Submission Core Strategy and that it is understood that the HSE take an 'in combination' approach to increases in population based on the HSE's zones, which are not defined based on administrative boundaries but on emergency planning zones.

Whilst the borough council's Development Control Committee resolved to grant planning permission for residential development at Boundary Hall on 10th February 2010, the Secretary of State has decided to call the application in for a Public Inquiry to consider the various aspects of the application which include population levels and its proximity to the Aldermaston AWE. The position on future development in the Tadley/Baughurst therefore remains uncertain at the present time, given that much of it lies within the 'inner' DEPZ.

The borough council would therefore wish to see the development of a jointly agreed approach to future development both in the East Kennet Valley and the Basingstoke and Deane area. The policy identifies 800 homes to be delivered over the Plan period, with Rural Service Centres and Service Villages being the focus for any new development. Given that issues remain in relation to the presence of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) is concerned that development is potentially not deliverable in this area or that it could have impacts on BDBC being able to cater for the needs of the existing population within the Tadley/Baughurst area. Policy SP6 indicates that West Berkshire Council will monitor housing completions and population levels; however, it is not clear how this will be implemented. Appendix 6 indicates "Policies SP2 - 6 are monitored through the whole range of indicators for Core Policies" and the main delivery indicators for this policy would therefore appear to be housing completions within settlements and within various areas of the District. In this respect, the borough council would question the soundness of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy in that the plan may be limited in being able to deal with changing circumstances should the position of the HSE either change or the strategic implications be clarified following the Secretary of State's decision on Boundary Hall. BDBC believes that West Berkshire Council's Core Strategy should clearly set out that the approach to housing development and the monitoring of housing completions and population should be developed in partnership with both BDBC and the Health and Safety Executive and Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII).

In relation to infrastructure and service provision, Tadley provides a range of services to residents in this part of Basingstoke and Deane and residents of West Berkshire. The Core Strategy does not appear to identify that some of the pressures for infrastructure and services will fall on BDBC/Hampshire County Council and there is currently no mechanism identified or agreed between the authorities as to how the increased pressures will be managed and catered for. BDBC would wish that the need for joint management of this issue is reflected within the text of the Core Strategy and within the Implementation and Delivery Plan.

Changes necessary for legal compliance and soundness

Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the DPD legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified in the question above (Justified/ Effective/ Consistent with National Policy) where this relates to soundness. You will need to say why this change will make the DPD legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

The borough council considers that the Core Strategy could be made by sound with the addition of an explanation as to how housing completions and population levels will be managed and monitored and how infrastructure and service provision will be delivered.

As mentioned above in section 6, BDBC are of the view that a partnership approach should be taken in addressing the issues surrounding the AWE at Aldermaston, and that this should be set out in the supporting text to ensure that both of the neighbouring authorities had a coherent approach in addressing housing completions and population levels with the HSE/NII. This would ensure consistency and enable flexibility during the Plan period, and ensure that the West Berkshire Core Strategy document is sound. We would also take the same view in relation to the provision of improvements to infrastructure and services within Basingstoke and Deane to accommodate the additional population generated within the East Kennet Valley area.

Participation at oral part of examination

If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination? YES, I wish to participate at the oral examination

Reasons for participation at oral part of examination

If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

There are significant issues remaining with regard to the monitoring of population and housing completions in relation to the presence of AWE at Aldermaston and Burghfield. The approach to housing provision in this area is a complex matter and BDBC needs to consider the long term needs of the existing population in the Tadley/Baughurst area within the Basingstoke and Deane borough. The borough council would therefore wish to see these resolved as part of a jointly agreed approach, but would be happy to expand on this at the examination