

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL PLAN

- 1.1 This Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the relevant Regulations, which require local planning authorities to prepare an up-to-date development plan. The Development Plan for Crawley comprises two documents: the West Sussex Structure Plan produced by the County Council and the Crawley Borough Local Plan. The Development Plan provides the policy framework for decisions concerning the use and development of land and all planning decisions should accord with this Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Crawley Borough Local Plan explains in detail how the policies of the county-wide Structure Plan will be applied in Crawley. The Local Plan makes provision for new development, including new homes and workplaces, and at the same time aims to protect and improve the natural and built environment. It takes account of recent government advice on planning, including updated regional guidance, and incorporates policies on environmental protection and sustainability.
- 1.2 The two main functions of an adopted Local Plan are:
- (i) to set out the Council's policies for the control of development; and
 - (ii) to make proposals for the development and use of land and to allocate land for specific purposes.

The Plan provides:

- * guidance to help individuals and organisations to plan the use of their land;
 - * an incentive to stimulate development by allocating land for particular types of development in appropriate locations;
 - * control to ensure that development is not against the public interest, by preventing it where it would harm the environment and amenity.
- 1.3 It is important, however, to appreciate that the Local Plan represents more than a tool for development control. It also deals with a wide range of planning and transport issues such as sustainability, urban and rural conservation and the relative emphasis to be given to movement by foot, cycle and public transport as opposed to accommodating road traffic. These are closely related to the use and development of land, and in many cases help to set the context in which the policies can most effectively be applied. In line with legislation and government advice, the Local Plan also includes policies for the improvement of the physical environment. An environmental appraisal of all its policies has been undertaken to make explicit the impact of the Plan's proposals on the environment.
- 1.4 The Local Plan covers all land within the administrative boundary of Crawley Borough, as at April 1993. It contains policies and proposals for guiding the development and use of land for the next seven years, up to 2006. It conforms with the West Sussex Structure Plan, approved in 1993, which also has a plan period up to 2006.

PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN

- 1.5 The preparation of the Local Plan is a complex process which started with the publication of the Consultation Draft Local Plan in 1994. The responses received from residents, businesses, developers and other organisations on the policies and proposals of this document were taken into account, and a Deposit Draft Local Plan was produced in 1995. This Plan was placed on deposit in November 1995 under the provisions of the

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) Regulations 1991, for formal objection or supporting representations.

- 1.6 Numerous changes were made to the Deposit Draft Local Plan which overcame a large proportion of the objections received. The remaining objections which could not be resolved were then considered by a Planning Inspector at a Public Local Inquiry which ran from October 1996 to May 1997. Following the Public Inquiry the Inspector submitted a report to the Borough Council in February 1998 recommending modifications that could be made to the Deposit Draft Local Plan to meet the objections. The Borough Council then published Proposed Modifications, and Further Proposed Modifications, to the Deposit Draft Local Plan which were placed on deposit for representations in July / August 1998, and December 1998 / January 1999 respectively. The representations received on these modifications were considered and a Notice of Intention to Adopt was published. In March 1999 a direction was received from the Secretary of State, stating that the Local Plan should not be adopted.
- 1.7 Following a Direction by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions in October 1999 under Section 43(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, further modifications have been made to the Local Plan to indicate that planning permission will not be granted within three years of the adoption of the Plan for housing development within the North East Sector allocation unless, first, the Secretary of State has published the new national airports policy and secondly the development is compatible with the combined effects of that policy and PPG Note 24 Planning and Noise (or any replacement guidance).
- 1.8 In March 1999, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions announced a decision to set in hand a study of airport issues in the South East and East of England and the impacts of options to provide additional airport capacity at a particular sites or at all. The study is expected to take approximately two years and its results will be incorporated into a proposed UK airports' policy. The long term future of Gatwick Airport will be encompassed by the study and the proposed UK airports' policy.
- 1.9 When he announced the airports' study, the Secretary of State indicated that it would be unacceptable to proceed with the development of the main new housing allocation made by the Local Plan in the North East Sector until the study and airports' policy make it clear it is appropriate and acceptable. Whether or when development of this allocation is allowed to proceed depends upon the findings of the study and the proposed UK airports' policy. In the event the development is considered to be inappropriate or unacceptable, or is significantly delayed, the situation will need to be addressed in a review of the Local Plan. No further allocations of land for new housing development in the period up to 2006 will be made nor housing development proposals (put forward as alternative provision to the North East Sector) granted planning permission until a final decision is made on the North East Sector. The study of the proposed UK airports policy may also require that a review be undertaken of the Local Plan policy for Gatwick Airport.
- 1.10 The proposed modifications made in light of the Secretary of States directions were placed on deposit in December 1999/January 2000 for a seven week period. Following consideration of the representations that were received during this deposit period, no further modifications were made. The Local Plan will be adopted on 19th April 2000. There then remains a short period for legal challenge before the Local Plan becomes a statutory document.

FORMAT OF THE LOCAL PLAN

- 1.11 The Plan consists of a Written Statement and a Proposals Map. The next Chapter explains the overall strategy of the Plan which provides the context for its policies and proposals. This is followed by chapters covering the separate topics of the Plan which are: General Development and Design; The Built and Natural Heritage; Use of the Countryside; Transport and Access; Housing; Economy; Shopping; Gatwick Airport;

Recreation and Leisure; Community Services; and Development of the North East Sector. These chapters detail the objectives for each topic and then the policies and proposals. Justification is given for each policy. The policies either apply to the whole Plan area, parts of the area or individual sites identified on the Proposals Map, and are shown in bold, enlarged type to distinguish them from the rest of the text. The text also refers to Supplementary Planning Guidance published by the Borough Council in the form of separate leaflets available from the Planning and Environmental Services Department. The final Chapters of the Plan describe the environmental appraisal process and the implementation of the Plan.

- 1.12 The Proposals Map covers the whole of Crawley Borough and is produced at a scale of 1:10,000. An inset map at 1:2500 defines in more detail proposals for the central area of Crawley.

MONITORING

- 1.13 In order to ensure that the Local Plan is effective, it will be kept under constant review to identify where policies need to be strengthened or modified at a later date. Monitoring procedures will indicate when changes are needed to policies and proposals to ensure that the Plan remains effective, responsive and robust. Primarily, these procedures consist of analysing decisions made on planning applications, any significant conditions imposed and refusals and appeals determined, together with the start and completion of development. This requires both numerical analysis and qualitative assessment of the effect of individual policies. The specific measures to be carried out are set out at the end of each chapter. Any issues arising from the monitoring process, such as out of date or ineffective policies will be addressed as part of the review of the Local Plan which is to commence in 1999.