



Guidance Note

Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need

This Guidance Note was approved by the Essex Planning Officers' Association at its meeting on 7 September 2017.

Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA)

Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need – September 2017

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At a Duty to Co-operate meeting for Chelmsford's Local Plan in May 2017, it was identified by participants that there was a need for a high-level process or mechanism to be agreed to guide how potential unmet housing needs are considered by all Essex authorities. Other requests by individual local authorities to potentially accommodate their 'unmet' housing need have been made in responding to recent Local Plan consultations. It was considered important to address this matter, as the lack of such a mechanism was identified as key issue by the Inspector at the Castle Point Local Plan Examination.
- 1.2 The EPOA Policy Forum discussed the matter at its meeting on 6 June and a Task Finish Group with membership from each of the Essex HMAs was established.



Housing Market Areas in Essex

- 1. West Essex - Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford (+East Hertfordshire)
- 2. South Essex - Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock
- 3. North and Central Essex - Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring
- 4. Maldon
- 5. Brentwood

2 Policy Context

- 2.1 **Housing Need** - Paragraphs 47 and 159 of the NPPF states the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing are assessed for the housing market area (FOAHN). Jointly prepared Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) identify the 'policy off' demographic derived need, making further adjustments for employment projections, affordability, the needs of specific groups in the community and wider market signals.

2.2 **Housing Supply** – Paragraph 159 of the NPPF identified the need to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which identifies the potential supply of housing sites.

3 Process

3.1 To have a clear understanding of the housing needs in their HMA, local planning authorities, in partnership with neighbouring authorities and HMAs, should:

- 1) Agree their full objectively assessed housing number
- 2) Irrespective of policy constraints, assess whether there are sufficient available and achievable housing sites to deliver the identified housing need
- 3) Agree a consistent approach and methodology for assessing policy constraints across the HMA
- 4) If there is an unmet housing requirement – reassess SHLAA, potentially re-distribute within HMA and then consider request to adjoining HMA.

3.2 Consideration will be given to the use of third parties such as the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) or Planning Officers Society (POS) in the case of disputes over this process.

