



Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-027-2014/15

Date of meeting: 6 October 2014

Portfolio:	Planning Policy	
Subject:	North Weald Bassett Masterplan Study	
Responsible Officer:	Anna Cronin	(01992 564119)
Democratic Services Officer:	Gary Woodhall	(01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the completion of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Study, and accept it into the Local Plan Evidence Base.**

Executive Summary:

This report seeks the acceptance of a key piece of technical work into the Local Plan Evidence Base for consideration as part of the preparation of the preferred option for the Local Plan. A copy of the full Masterplan Study is available in the Members' Room, and an Executive Summary is appended to this report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Adopting this technical work into the Local Plan Evidence Base will enable the Council to work towards a sound new Local Plan, which uses robust information. This in turn means that the new Local Plan would be far more likely to be accepted at Examination in Public by the independent Inspector.

Other Options for Action:

Not to accept into the Local Plan Evidence Base or ask for additional work to be undertaken

Report:

Introduction

1. Following the Council's decision as landowner in August 2013, as a result of the Deloitte study, that a mixed use approach to the North Weald Airfield which retains the aviation activities would be the most appropriate, it was agreed that in order to inform the Local Plan a more detailed Masterplan exercise was required, to consider the way the Airfield relates to the wider village in the context of the other sites around the village put forward for consideration for development by their owners. Such a study would focus on feasibility, deliverability and potential options for development, and provide evidence as part of the assessment process leading to consultation on a Draft Local Plan.

2. The purpose of the study was to ensure that the implication of the decision for the 'mixed use' option for the Airfield was considered in relation to North Weald Bassett village. The Masterplan study has included consideration of the viable mix of land uses and associated infrastructure that should be considered across the village (and wider area where necessary), long term Green Belt boundaries, potential phasing of any change and mechanisms for delivery. Such a study was considered to be needed for North Weald Bassett for a number of reasons:

- The Council has expressed its intention as landowner to release part of the airfield site for development and this therefore needs to be addressed and the site considered as part of the portfolio of sites proposed by all landowners to go forward. The Airfield is only one of a number of possible development sites around the settlement which have been put forward by their owners.
- The possible mixed use of Council owned land at North Weald Airfield could be a key part of the eventual Plan strategy, particularly because it is a significant site in size and a previously developed site in the potential basket of sites from which development allocations will be selected.
- The overall area of land covered by North Weald Airfield is significant when compared to the size of the existing village and so any development there will need to be handled sensitively. (That is not to suggest that other developments should not also be handled sensitively).
- Given Government emphasis on ensuring the best use is made of publicly owned land, it is appropriate that North Weald Airfield is now fully considered in its wider context to ensure any approach to development respects the grain of the existing village and could function properly in terms of supporting infrastructure.
- The choices in terms of the viable delivery of the Airfield and other SLAA sites need to be reviewed for plan making, hence a number of alternative options for the configuration of uses on those sites put forward are being considered.

3. Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners (including Alan Baxter Associates transport consultants and infrastructure engineers, and GL Hearn property consultants) were commissioned in November 2013 to undertake a Masterplan study for North Weald Bassett village, to identify a vision for the village and to provide a clear framework of options for future development and investment. The Masterplan covers transport and movement considerations, provision of new homes, economic opportunities, including the role of North Weald Airfield, shops and community services for the village and the role of open space, including the identification of a long term defensible green belt boundary. The study will feed into the Local Plan process and will form part of the evidence base to inform future planning decisions taken by the Council. The work has now been completed and the final report received. Members are therefore asked to note it and accept it as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

The Study

4. The work undertaken by the project team was in two phases. Stage 1 saw a review of policy documents including key background and technical documents together with an urban design and heritage review and a review of the transport and utilities within the settlement. Building on the existing evidence base the property consultants GL Hearn undertook a market review of all the relevant property market sectors, analysing how the local markets have performed. A socio economic review was undertaken to understand the future social infrastructure requirements. The sites identified in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment following the Council's 'call for sites' for the Local Plan were reviewed, along with the Deloitte report and the four possible sites identified at the airfield.

5. As part of establishing the key issues and priorities for North Weald Bassett the consultants undertook a range of engagement including an Officer Working Group session on 21 January 2014, a community workshop session at North Weald Village Hall on 25 January 2014 attended by around 85 people, and a landowners' discussion session on 13 February 2014. In addition individual interviews were carried out with key stakeholders. These workshops and discussions helped to identify an underlying set of principles to inform any future development and against which the potential options could be tested at stage two of the project. Any new development in North Weald Bassett, aside from small scale infill, would take place on land which is currently within the Green Belt. The study therefore sought to consider the suitability of sites in relation to their contribution to the national aims and purposes of the Green Belt and policies set out within the National Planning Policy Framework – the methodology used is consistent with that reported to Cabinet on 23 June 2014.

6. Based on the feedback the consultants developed an overarching approach and key principles. The overarching aim of any new development should be to improve North Weald Bassett and make the settlement more sustainable and help to better meet the needs of residents. The principles established to help meet these goals were:

- a sustainable commercial centre;
- easy access to green space;
- appropriate density range of between 30 and 40 dwellings per hectare;
- improving movement;
- preserving rural views; and
- providing community uses.

7. During stage 2 of the project the study team developed Masterplan options for any future development based on the development principles and the suitable parcels of land established during stage 1 of the project. These alternative scenarios were tested against existing facilities, viability and infrastructure requirements. The draft spatial options were reviewed with Council officers through the Officers Working Group on 15 May 2014 which included key stakeholders. A community exhibition on the two broad spatial options was held at the North Weald Village Hall on Saturday 28 June 2014 between 11 and 3pm. Leaflets advertising the exhibition were distributed to all residents' homes in the village and a briefing meeting was held with members of the Parish Council prior to the event. The exhibition was attended by approximately 160 people. Following the exhibition the material was displayed on the Council's website and comments requested by 14 July 2014. Visitors to the

exhibition were invited to complete a feedback form and residents and stakeholders could also email feedback to the Council. 35 feedback forms were returned, along with 9 written representations. A further workshop was held with officers on 12 August 2014 on how the proposed options might be delivered, should the Council decide to take them forward, and provided a further opportunity for comment. All the comments received including those from one of the landowners' have been carefully considered and taken into account in the consultants' final report. As a result of the comments the key changes made to the final report and to the material shown at the June exhibition are as follows:

- **Landscape character:** Clarified references to the importance of landscape and existing evidence of landscape sensitivity and use of existing hedgerows/watercourses as boundaries where possible.
- **Baseline analysis** - references to Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, TPOs and culverting have been added.
- The land ownership and call for sites plans included in the report make it clear that the land is currently in private ownership, and green shading has been removed to avoid any confusion that it is public open space.
- The plans illustrating the community feedback received at the workshop on 25 January 2014, and which were shown at the exhibition on 28 June, have been annotated to make it clear that they show an amalgam of views and there were contradictory views expressed.
- Alterations to the green infrastructure plans to clarify that the proposal for a Country Park to the south of the village is in Scenario A only as an aspiration that could potentially be enabled through housing to the south of the village.
- **Infrastructure** - Updated transport measures and cost estimates, risks and role of CIL/S106 in the chapter on infrastructure and implementation considerations.

8. The final Masterplan study sets out two scenarios, each with three growth options, and these formed the basis of the community exhibition and consultation (see attached indicative plans). **Please note that in the final reports the scenarios have been switched around from those shown at the community exhibition so that Scenario A is now Scenario B and B is now A.**

9. In the final report **Scenario A** proposes new homes both to the west and to the south and east of the settlement (ranging from 458 homes in option 1, to 1021 homes in option 2 and 1540 homes in option 3) whilst maintaining a maximum distance from the High Road and a minimum distance from the Ongar Redoubt. New homes are designed to strengthen the existing commercial centre, establish a small secondary centre at Tyler's Green and provide leisure and commercial uses between the settlement and the airfield. Green walking routes to the surrounding fields are established, with a particularly broad green area around the river corridor. The proposal includes the possibility of a country park around the Ongar Redoubt as an aspiration that could potentially be enabled through housing to the south. All three

options provide for new health facilities to be developed and a new primary school is proposed to the west of the village centre in options 2 and 3.

10. **Scenario B** proposes new homes to the north and west of the village only (ranging from 463 homes in option 1, to 1202 homes in option 2 and 1540 homes in option 3), designed to strengthen the existing commercial centre, establish a small secondary centre at Tyler's Green and provide leisure and commercial uses between the village and the airfield. As in Scenario A, green walking routes to the surrounding field are established, with a particularly broad green area around the river corridor. All three options within this scenario provide for new health facilities to be developed and a new primary school is proposed to the west of the village centre.

11. It is important to understand that the receipt of the Masterplan study does not pre-empt any decisions by the Council as to the location of future development in the emerging Local Plan. However, the consultants were asked to advise on the infrastructure and implementation considerations inherent in taking any of the options forward. To this end, the final report includes a delivery plan and risk assessment and advice on delivery structure and procurement.

Resource Implications:

Preparation of this work forms part of working towards the new Local Plan, and features within the existing Local Plan budget.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The delivery of a Local Plan, informed by a robust evidence base, will contribute to safer, cleaner, greener objectives by planning for sustainable development.

Consultation Undertaken:

Internal consultation has taken place with senior officers, the Chief Executive, the Portfolio Holder, key stakeholders and the Local Plan OWG on 12 August 2014. A copy of the final report is being supplied to the Parish Council.

Background Papers:

- Report to Cabinet on Review of North Weald Airfield 22 July 2013.
- Final Masterplan report prepared by AMUP September 2014.
- Exhibition boards from the community exhibition on 28 June 2014.

Risk Management:

Preparation of the Local Plan is a key priority for the Council.

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Due Regard Record

Name of policy or activity:

What this record is for: By law the Council must, in the course of its service delivery and decision making, think about and see if it can eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. This active consideration is known as, ‘paying due regard’, and it must be recorded as evidence. We pay due regard by undertaking equality analysis and using what we learn through this analysis in our service delivery and decision making. The purpose of this form is as a log of evidence of due regard.

When do I use this record? Every time you complete equality analysis on a policy or activity this record must be updated. Due regard must be paid, and therefore equality analysis undertaken, at ‘formative stages’ of policies and activities including proposed changes to or withdrawal of services. This record must be included as an appendix to any report to decision making bodies. Agenda Planning Groups will not accept any report which does not include evidence of due regard being paid via completion of an Equality Analysis Report.

How do I use this record: When you next undertake equality analysis open a Due Regard Record. Use it to record a summary of your analysis, including the reason for the analysis, the evidence considered, what the evidence told you about the protected groups, and the key findings from the analysis. This will be key information from Steps 1-7 of the Equality Analysis process set out in the Toolkit, and your Equality Analysis Report. This Due Regard Record is Step 8 of that process.

Date / Name	Summary of equality analysis
6.8.14 Anna Cronin	<p>The North Weald Bassett masterplan report prepared by AMUP relates to the potential options for future development and considers the needs of all. As a function of the Local Plan is to make provision for housing, jobs etc needed by local population in future, this evidence will assist in making provision to benefit of all those with protected characteristics in future.</p> <p>The masterplan and the report in itself will not have any adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the policy decision.</p> <p>This study in itself cannot foster good relations as it is a piece of technical evidence on potential options for future growth of North Weald Bassett, none of which relate to the protected characteristics.</p> <p>No actions are required as a result of this analysis. The Local Plan will be the subject to equality analysis (EQIA) before it is submitted for examination by an external Inspector.</p>

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Introduction

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were commissioned by Epping Forest District Council to undertake a masterplanning study for North Weald Bassett, to identify a vision for the settlement and to provide a clear framework for future development and investment. The study covers transport and movement considerations, provision of new homes, economic opportunities, shops and community services for the settlement, and the role of open space. This report sets out a vision and objectives for North Weald Bassett, masterplan options and involved stakeholder and community engagement. The study feeds into the Local Plan process for Epping Forest District Council.

Baseline analysis and community engagement

A review of statutory and supplementary policy context has been undertaken along with a review of the socio-economic considerations and priorities specific to North Weald Bassett. These inform an understanding of the growth expected for the local area and how this sets the conditions for the masterplanning study.

The urban design and heritage analysis identifies key features of North Weald Bassett's character and identity to be retained and complemented in the future, while a review of transport and utilities identifies infrastructure capacity and future requirements. A review of the local property market provides an economic context highlighting trends in housing and employment for the area and establishes key assumptions against which masterplanning options can be assessed. Epping Forest District Council's Call for Sites highlights the enthusiasm of landowners for development in the area, and that objective consideration of these sites is necessary in order to ensure future development will be delivered in a fair, appropriate and sustainable way. Local residents were given the opportunity to feed their knowledge and thoughts about North Weald Bassett into the study at a workshop early in the process. The general attitude towards development was found to be positive so long as this brings improvements to social and physical infrastructure.

Vision

The analysis and consultation undertaken during the study indicated that the settlement has potential for some growth that can help to more effectively support the local community in the future, but that this growth must be minded to preserve the existing assets of the settlement and bring about additional benefits for the community. The assets include, but are not limited to, the settlement's relationship with the surrounding green open space, stand-out historic buildings, a range of housing types which can support a mixed community and the heritage and current economic role of the North Weald Airfield. The vision is to protect these assets, attract investment to strengthen the existing commercial centre and establish North Weald Bassett as a sustainable place in its own right with an active community life.

Spatial Framework

A general framework has been identified which could help to augment and consolidate the structure of the settlement and provide for various growth scenarios. Areas suitable for residential, commercial, employment, leisure and community uses have all been identified. North Weald Bassett has a relatively coherent pattern of settlement based on incremental development to either side of the High Road. The linear shape of the settlement set within Metropolitan Green Belt ensures that all residents live within a few minutes' walk to open countryside. New development should respect, protect and augment the inherent character of the North Weald Bassett to preserve and enhance the benefits it brings to its residents.

The masterplan study articulates a set of development principles, agreed by community stakeholders, which aim to:

- Preserve the discrete 'village-like' character of North Weald Bassett
- Preserve and enhance settlement's relationship to the Greenbelt/countryside
- Consolidate the structure of the settlement to make it more 'walkable' and accessible

- Increase the range and quantity of local shops, leisure and community facilities, both in an augmented centre, and in other convenient locations elsewhere
- Increase the range of types and quality of employment space within the settlement
- Enhance the context of North Weald Airfield to help stimulate additional uses and activities which benefit residents
- Improve the quality of local public transport links and mitigate present highways issues

Masterplan options

A number of masterplan options have been developed. Option 1 envisages up to 500 new dwellings being built in North Weald Bassett over the coming 20 years. Option 2 envisages between approximately 1,000 and 1,200 new dwellings and option 3 envisages between 1,500 and 1,600 new dwellings over the next 20 years. Broad spatial scenarios for new development exist, regardless of the level of growth. These consider whether new dwellings should be introduced to the south east of the existing settlement, covering land towards the Ongar Redoubt and including part of the existing golf course (Scenario A); or whether it is preferable for residential development to extend closer to the North Weald Airfield, up to Merlin Way (Scenario B). In addition to this, consideration is given to focusing new development on strengthening the existing commercial centre towards the southern end of the High Road, and the extent to which a secondary commercial centre at Tyler's Green is intensified.

The Masterplanning Study identifies suitable locations for commercial development, such as retail and leisure uses to support residential growth and other locations for employment generating uses, including those relating to airfield activity. The demand arising from a larger population at North Weald Bassett will help ensure the viability of these facilities and services. The Council's emerging Economic Development Strategy and studies relating to the future of the airfield will map and in greater detail the delivery of viable employment generating uses.

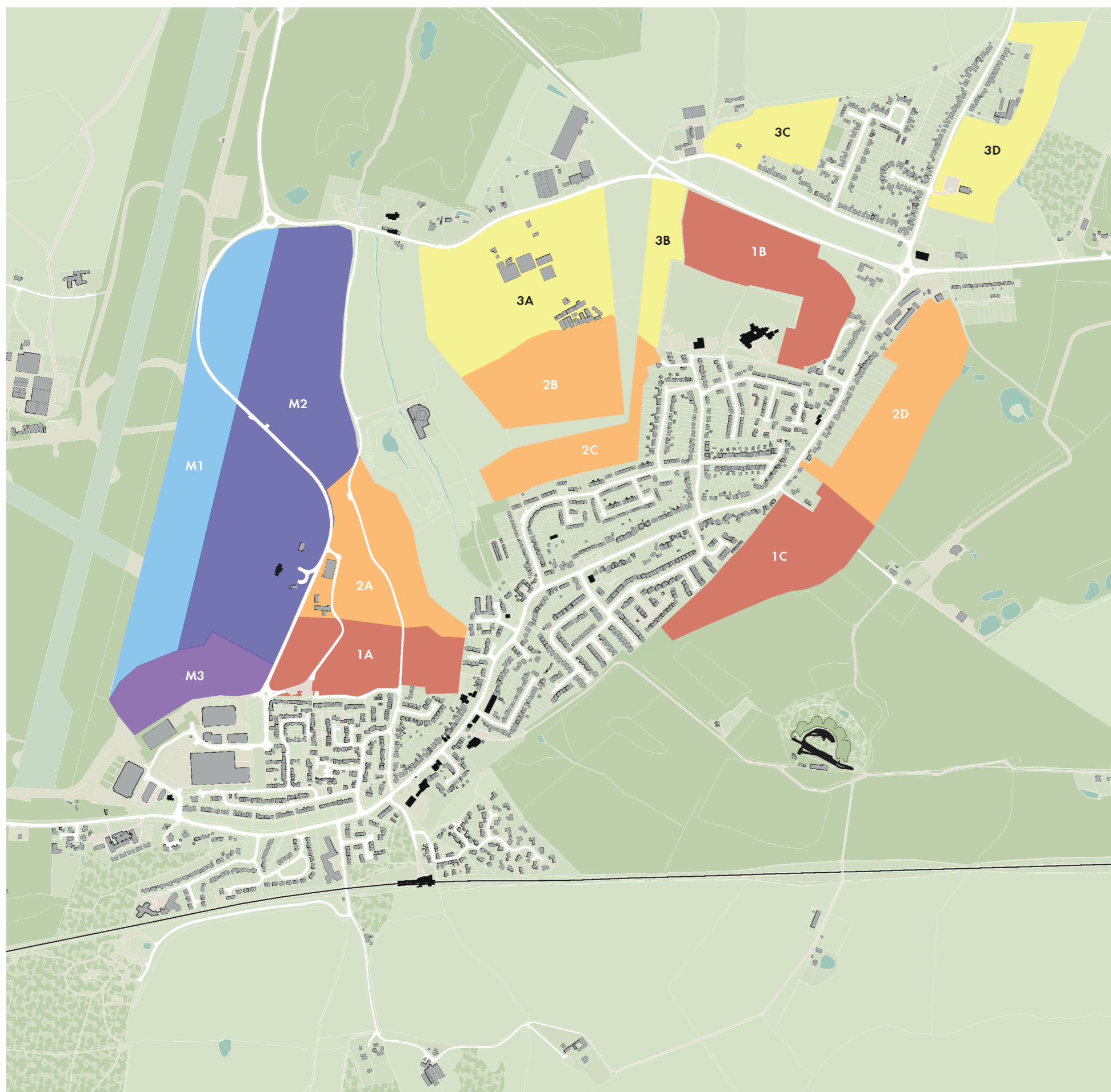
Residents were given further opportunity to comment on these options at an exhibition on the 28 June 2014. A summary of their feedback has been included in the report.

Viability and infrastructure considerations

The physical and community infrastructure requirements for new development at North Weald Bassett are identified and described in broad terms, related to the different spatial options.

A high level viability analysis has been undertaken to inform the masterplanning process and the assessment has indicated a viable development scenario. The results of the viability testing give an indication of the funding levels which might be available to invest in new social infrastructure in the settlement, including a new GP surgery premises, a new primary school and landscape open spaces and play spaces.

Delivery is envisaged over a long period of time and a number of phasing principles have been set out to ensure development integrates with existing development, and avoids disconnected and isolated pockets of residential development, and to ensure adequate services, facilities and infrastructure to support the new levels of housing proposed at each phase.

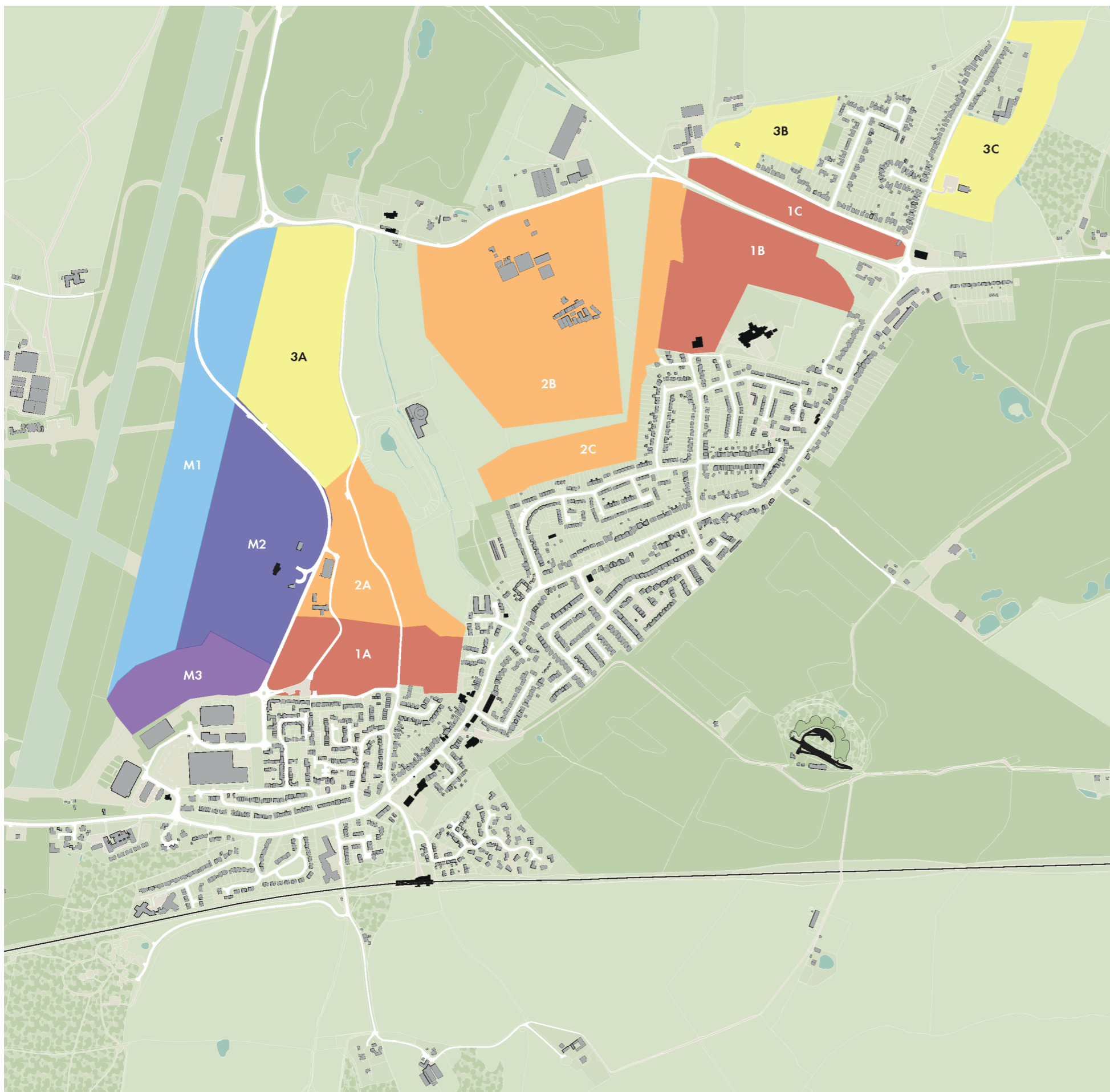


- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Local waste plan site allocation
- Mixed-use
- Aviation/mixed-use

Scenario A

North Weald Bassett
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- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Local waste plan site allocation
- Mixed-use
- Aviation/mixed-use

Scenario B

**North Weald Bassett
Masterplanning Study**

**Allies and Morrison
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