

New Market Town Study – Explanatory Note

The three Local Authorities in the central Sussex area, Crawley Borough Council (CBC), Horsham District Council (HDC) and Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), are each in the process of preparing their Local Development Framework Core Strategy (or the Review of an adopted Core Strategy). A key part of this work is the ongoing consideration of the provision of housing in terms of numbers and location in the Gatwick area.

Issues relating to the scale and distribution of new development, delivering not only new homes but space for new and expanding businesses and community facilities, have focussed both on the role of Crawley and the other major settlements in the area, and on the possibility of a new market town within the area known as the Gatwick Sub-Region, more specifically in the A23 corridor area.

In late 2009 the three authorities agreed that there was merit in exploring a 'New Market Town' option which could not only meet the needs of this Regionally important area but could also release some pressure on existing settlements within the Districts and Borough in the longer term.

A study was commissioned in spring 2010 to explore this option, taking into account the work already undertaken as background work by the authorities in their Local Development Framework preparation. GL Hearn consultants were commissioned to undertake the feasibility study, which can be viewed below.

The study is broken down into five key areas:

- Study Context
- Environmental and Physical Constraints
- Deliverability
- Settlement Function, Principles and Options; and
- Governance

The conclusions from the study, as considered by this Council, are that a New Market Town is feasible in the area of study. However, the study recommends that further work is required in order to develop understanding regarding the deliverability of a New Market Town. In order to do this the further work recommended covers a number of areas, however key areas being assessments of transport and the provision of utilities infrastructure (e.g. water, sewage). The longer term governance is also an area that would need further work following this feasibility study.

Each authority has/is currently preparing an assessment of locally generated housing needs to assist in establishing the scale of housing development which would be appropriate for its district or borough. Whilst the options identified in the new market town study fall predominately within Mid Sussex District; strategic housing issues are relevant to all three authorities, particularly given the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership. These are issues on which, through the new Localism Bill, there will be a 'duty to cooperate'.