

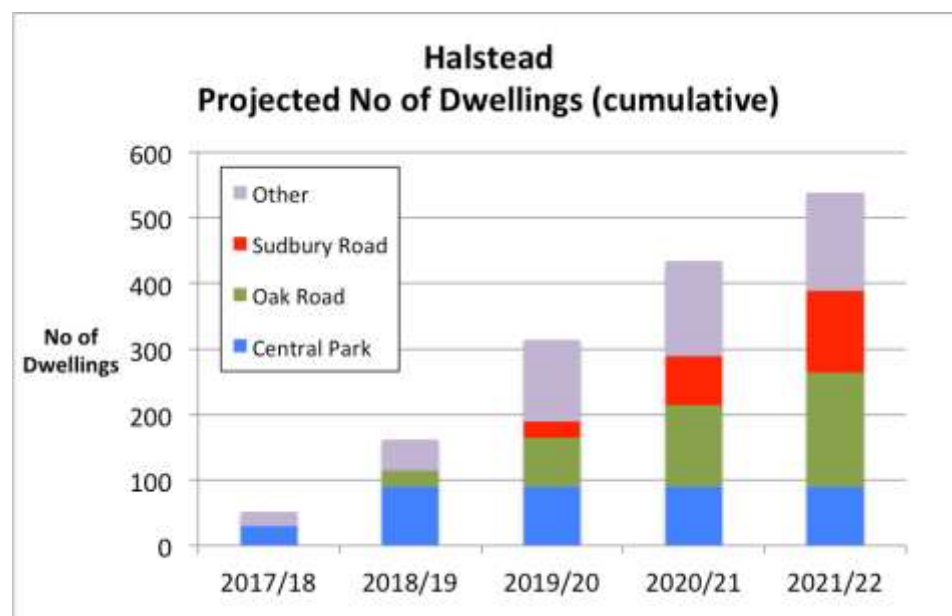
Committee	FULL COUNCIL
Date	12th February 2018
Agenda Item	16

Infrastructure

Following the increase in house building in Halstead it was decided to investigate some of the potential impacts that the building may have upon the infrastructure of the town.

To gain a better understanding of the increase in house building a meeting was arranged with Local Plan officers at Braintree District Council. This revealed a process where BDC calculates and publishes a housing trajectory for the Braintree District covering the next five years. This is published on their website, the last being dated 30th September 2017.

This trajectory lists the planning applications and a forecast of when the houses are expected to be built. From this the data for Halstead has been extracted. This is shown in the graph below.



Overall 539 dwellings are expected to be built in Halstead in the next five years. As expected the main developments are (a) the land off Oak Road, (b) Central Park in Colchester Road and (c) the land off Sudbury Road. However, there are several smaller developments, which add up to a further 150 dwellings.

In addition to this there are other potential developments not currently included in the trajectory that could increase the number of houses still further.

Monitoring of the situation will continue as further updated trajectories are published.

Doctors' Surgery

The growth in housing obviously puts further pressure upon an already stretched Doctors' Surgery. At the December council meeting representatives of the surgery explained some of the short-term measures that they were taking. However, despite this, further work is needed to increase clinical space so that they can recruit more clinical staff.

Meetings have already been with the surgery to try to understand what more can be done to increase capacity. Details about the Section 106 developer contributions that have already been agreed specifically for the Elizabeth Courtauld Surgery have been explained. These funds would be paid firstly through BDC and then passed on the NHS England. The timing for the release of the funds varies depending upon the agreement but it's generally at various stages of the house-building programme.

The next step is to arrange a meeting with NHS England, to try to understand how the funds will be used to increase capacity.

The surgery have expressed their appreciation for the support given by councillors. This support adds to the work already being done by surgery staff themselves.

Schools

The housing growth also has the potential to put increased strain on the number of places available in local schools.

In January a meeting was held with Cllr. Ray Gooding who is the cabinet member for Education at Essex County Council and a senior officer. At this meeting they explained the process that they used to follow the number of school places required and anticipate any shortfalls.

ECC conducts a review of school places every year and publishes it on their website. This looks at demand for places and school capacity over a ten-year period. The current 10-year plan shows that there are sufficient places for Secondary Education and a small shortfall in later years in Primary Education. It appears from the current information that this shortfall is likely to be met by extension to existing schools rather than building an additional school.

A reduction in places required comes from a change in the demographics. This partly offsets some of the additional places coming from the new housing.

ECC are currently working on their update of the 10-year forecast for 2018. This will take into account the latest housing growth forecasts and may well pull forward the year in which a shortfall occurs.

It was reassuring from the meeting that those in charge of schools for Essex have clear measures for monitoring the need for school places.

Recommendation: that HTC notes this report.

Cllr. Mick Radley
Cllr. Dave Gronland