

AGENDA ITEM NO.

Board/Committee:	Economic Development Board
Date of Meeting:	9 th February 2022
Title:	Second Version of the Fareham Local Plan 2037: Statement of Common Ground between Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council
Author:	Manager of Planning Policy
Status:	For Decision

PURPOSE

In accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. Consequently it is necessary for both Gosport Borough Council (GBC) and Fareham Borough Council (FBC) to agree a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) for their respective Local Plans.

Members will recall that an initial version of the SoCG for the Fareham Local Plan 2037 (FLP2037) between the two authorities was agreed by this Board on 17th November 2021. This highlighted that there was an outstanding highway issue that needed further research and that it may be necessary to revise the SoCG accordingly. This report sets out the details surrounding this outstanding issue.

RECOMMENDATION

That this Board:

- Approves the Second Version of the Fareham Local Plan 2037: Statement of Common Ground between Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council (Appendix 1) and that the Head of Planning and Regeneration duly signs it on behalf of the Council.
- That this Council withdraws its holding objection to the Fareham Local Plan 2037 on the specific highway matter detailed in this report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will recall that the initial SoCG was presented as recently as November 2021. This highlighted that there was an outstanding holding objection relating to the need for clarification regarding the transport modelling undertaken on behalf of FBC. This clarification has now been received and this report focuses on that particular matter.
- 1.2 For Members' convenience the previous Board Report on the initial SoCG (17/11/21) is included in Appendix 2 which sets out the background to the Council's representations to the various versions of the Fareham Local Plan and details the other matters included in the

agreed SoCG.

- 1.3 The most recent version of the Fareham Local Plan 2037 is the Revised Publication Draft (Regulation 19) (FLP2037). This was reported to the Regulatory Board on 21st July 2021. FBC have now submitted this version of their Local Plan to the Secretary of State and an Inspector has been appointed to hold an Examination in Public on the unresolved objections. The sessions are currently scheduled to commence on 8th March. The SoCG will form part of FBC's evidence base.
- 1.4 The representations made by GBC to the latest FLP2037 can be summarised as follows:
- That this Council supports that land east of Newgate Lane East is designated within the Strategic Gap as shown on the latest Policies Map;
 - That this Council supports that the land east of Newgate Lane East (formerly known as HA2) is no longer identified as a housing allocation in the FLP2037;
 - That this Council submits a holding objection relating to the East of Crofton Cemetery and South of Longfield Avenue allocations until such time that a transport assessment (TA) which includes the cumulative impact of development in the FLP2037 and the emerging Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038 (GBLP2038) concludes that there is no detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the road infrastructure serving the Gosport Peninsula including the Stubbington Bypass and Newgate Lane East. This work would form part of the Statement of Common Ground between the two local planning authorities;
 - That this Council, whilst supporting the overall intention of Policy DS1: Development in the Countryside, considers that amendments are required for reasons set out in the Regulatory Board Report of 21st July 2021
 - That this Council objects to the detailed wording of the following policies or parts of policies as detailed in the Regulatory Board Report of 21st July 2021:
 - Policy HP4
 - Policy HP6
 - That this Council supports the employment allocations at Daedalus (Policies E1, E2 and E3).
 - That this Council supports the following policies:
 - Policy E5 which protects employment sites including a number on the Gosport Peninsula;

- Policy E6 on boatyards which aims to protect important marine sites for employment purposes;
 - Policy E7 which aims to safeguard the Solent Airport at Daedalus;
 - Policy TIN2 which aims to ensure development does not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the residual cumulative impact on the road network is not severe;
 - Policy TIN3 which safeguards land to support the delivery of the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit scheme.
- That Policy NE9 includes specific reference to the potential for green infrastructure improvements in the Fareham, Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington Strategic Gap.

1.5 This report focuses on the holding objection as set out in the third bullet point in Paragraph 1.4, regarding highway matters concerning these two allocations.

2 **Report**

- 2.1 Members will recall that the FLP2037 includes two proposed allocations: land east of Crofton Cemetery (180 dwellings); and land south of Longfield Road (1250 dwellings). This Council considered this element in detail in the Regulatory Board Report of 21st July 2021. Consequently the allocations are considered acceptable in relation to two out of three of the main areas of concern: there is no direct access onto the Stubbington Bypass from these sites; and that both developments can be designed to leave a functional gap between the Stubbington Bypass and the built-up area and hence retain a sense that one is leaving one built up area and passing through the countryside.
- 2.2 On 10th January 2022 a planning application for 206 dwellings on land east of Crofton Cemetery was allowed on appeal by a Planning Inspector. This proposal accorded with the two points mentioned above in that there is no direct access onto the Stubbington Bypass and that there is a sufficient buffer between the site and the Stubbington Bypass and thereby maintaining a functioning gap. It is therefore appropriate to amend the relevant references in the SoCG accordingly as shown by the tracked changes in Appendix 1. Consequently following the appeal decision the holding objection now only effectively relates to the allocation south of Longfield Avenue.
- 2.3 The Council considers that given the long-standing and well documented issues of accessibility and congestion on the Gosport peninsula it is critically important to demonstrate that the cumulative impact of new development in the Strategic Gap together with the proposed growth in Gosport Borough will not have a detrimental impact

on the capacity and the overall accessibility of the highway network serving the Peninsula including the Stubbington Bypass, and Newgate Lane East as well as other key road junctions.

- 2.4 This holding objection and the initial SoCG recognised that further clarification was required in relation to the transport assessment (TA) on this matter.
- 2.5 The TA which supports the FLP2037 was produced in 2020 and uses a base year of 2015. The methodology for the Transport Assessment was agreed with the Highway Authority (Hampshire County Council) and identifies a number of junctions requiring mitigation as a result of Local Plan development. The TA modelling uses Solent Transport's Sub-Regional Transport Model (SRTM) to test the cumulative impact of the Local Plan traffic at a macro-level. The model makes assumptions in relation to growth from sites identified in neighbouring authorities adopted Local Plan. The TA followed the established methodology used by a number of Hampshire authorities, and although there were some junctions that flagged as potential as a significant or severe impact when mitigation was added the impact was found to be acceptable. Furthermore, HCC as the Highway Authority have raised no objection to the methodology used.
- 2.6 The TA is based on a Do Minimum scenario of 12,100 homes which is greater than the housing growth identified in the latest FLP2037 which sets out a current requirement of 9,556 dwellings and a total supply of 10,594 dwellings. Both the Stubbington Bypass and Newgate Lane are included in the model's baseline and no capacity issues have been identified as a result. There are no unacceptable impacts identified nor mitigation required to junctions near or in the Gosport administrative boundary from proposed allocations in the FLP2037. This includes the Peel Common roundabout, Gosport Road or roads that lead into Stubbington.
- 2.7 The two authorities in liaison with HCC have now undertaken some further work on the transport assessment which demonstrates that the TA (2020) modelling used for the latest version of the FLP2037 included sufficient 'headroom' to accommodate the additional growth proposed in the emerging GBLP2038. Details are summarised below:
 - a) The FBC TA used for the latest FLP2037 modelled 12,169 rather than the 10,594 eventually included in the FLP2037;
 - b) Consequently the modelling included 1,575 dwellings over the number included in the FLP2037 thus providing some 'headroom' in the modelling to absorb additional growth in Gosport Borough;
 - c) This modelling did include an element of growth in Gosport Borough to cover the period 2015-2036 (the period covered by the TA) including all outstanding planning permissions and

allocations and an assumed 1,800 dwellings to take into account growth in addition to that identified in the current adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (GBLP2029). Consequently a total of **3,855 dwellings** in Gosport has been included in the modelling used in the TA;

- d) However this figure does not include the full level of growth covered in the emerging Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038 (GBLP2038) including the additional two years of the plan period;
- e) In order to take this into account if one takes the proposed 206 dwellings per annum (dpa) in the GBLP2038 and extrapolate this figure over the whole period between 2015-2038 this would total 4,738 which is **883 dwellings** more than modelled in point c (i.e. 3,855);
- f) Importantly this 883 figure is lower the 1,575 'headroom' outlined in b) with **692 'remaining'**;
- g) The 'remaining' figure could be higher if one assumes a lower dpa over the whole period. For example based on the housing supply as at 1st April 2021 the dpa projected over the whole adopted Local Plan period 2011-2029 is currently calculated to be 196 dpa. If one uses this figure to cover the Adopted Local Plan period between 2015-2029 (i.e. 14 years) and use the 206 dpa included in the emerging GBLP2038 figure to cover the period 2029-2038 (i.e. 9 years) one would calculate a figure 4,598 dwellings (i.e. 2,744 + 1854). This would be 743 dwellings higher than originally modelled for Gosport but certainly within the 1,575 headroom with **832 'remaining'**.

2.8 It is considered appropriate to determine similar impacts on the road network when substituting the additional growth identified in the emerging GBLP2038 for those previously included in the Strategic Growth Area modelled in FBC's TA. Ultimately the key routes and junctions would be used by traffic from developments in both Fareham and Gosport on the peninsula in both scenarios.

2.9 The TA shows that the modelled number of dwellings does not have an unacceptable impact on either journey times in and out of the peninsula, nor the objectives of the new infrastructure investment at Stubbington Bypass and Newgate Lane. The modelling reflects the unmitigated scenario, i.e. the do minimum model run with no mitigation included. Localised mitigation will be required as part of the developments which could include highway, public transport and active mode improvements, either in isolation or collectively.

2.10 GBC's own modelling commissioned for the GBLP2038 demonstrates that growth in Gosport does not generate any significant issues on the highway network outside of the Borough.

- 2.11 HCC have made representations regarding the submitted FLP2037 and consider that the TA assessed the cumulative impacts of the site allocations and demonstrates that the significant transport impacts of the local plan development on the highway network can be mitigated through proposed highway interventions as well as the relevant public transport and active travel proposals and this is reflected in the SoCG agreed between FBC and HCC¹.
- 2.12 In the light of the above it is considered that the TA work undertaken by FBC takes into account growth in Gosport Borough and that the impacts on the road network of the proposed allocation south of Longfield Avenue as set out in the FLP2038 are therefore deemed acceptable in principle subject to the appropriate local/site-specific mitigation measures. It is clear that any growth beyond these levels will require a refreshed TA to consider fully the impacts on the highway. It is therefore proposed to withdraw the Council's holding objection and amend the SoCG accordingly. For Member's convenience a tracked changes version is included in Appendix 1 with the revisions shown. If agreed by the Board these will be 'accepted' and the second version of the SoCG will be signed and supersede the original version. This will then be included as part of FBC's evidence base.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The statutory Duty to Co-operate places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other organisations to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to develop development plan documents. As part of the Duty to Cooperate, the NPPF introduced the requirement for cross boundary issues to be addressed in a Statement of Common Ground. Whilst this is not a duty to agree it is important for a Planning Inspector to be clear where there are areas of agreement between local authorities and where disagreements remain. This document serves this purpose.

4 Conclusion and Next steps

- 4.1 The document sets out broad areas of agreement between the authorities as well as setting out briefly how previous matters of concern have been addressed. It also highlights matters that are unresolved. Once signed by the relevant officer from each authority this document will be submitted as part of FBC's evidence base for its forthcoming examination in public.
- 4.2 GBC have maintained an objection to Policies DS1, HP4 and HP6 regarding the detailed wording of these policies which it considers has the potential to undermine the strategic gap, particularly east of Newgate Lane. FBC however have not amended these policies and

¹ Document SCG007: Highways Authority Statement of Common Ground:
http://planningpdf.fareham.gov.uk/pdf/planning/local_plan/SCG007_Highway_Authority_Statement_of_Common_Ground.pdf

this area of disagreement remains and will need to be considered by the Planning Inspector.

- 4.3 This Council will also prepare a SoCG with FBC at the Regulation 19 stage of the emerging GBLP 2038 later this year and this will also be informed by emerging evidence of the work being carried out by the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) on a sub-regional planning strategy.

Financial Services comments:	None
Legal Services comments:	None
Climate Change	Not applicable- This is an agreed position with Fareham Borough Council regarding the Fareham Local Plan 2037 which is subject to a sustainability appraisal prepared by FBC and will be included as part of the forthcoming examination in public.
Equality and Diversity	Not applicable- This report relates to a document prepared by FBC and will be subject to its own Equality and Diversity Statement.
Crime and Disorder	Not applicable- This is an agreed position with Fareham Borough Council regarding the Fareham Local Plan 2037 which is subject to a sustainability appraisal prepared by FBC and will be included as part of the forthcoming examination in public.
Council Plan:	N/A
Risk Assessment:	See Section 3
Background papers:	Regulatory Board of the 21st July 2021
Appendices	Appendix 1: Second Version of the Fareham Local Plan 2037: Statement of Common Ground between Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council (Feb 2022) Appendix 2- Economic Development Board Report of 17 th November 2021 relating to initial version of the Fareham Local Plan 2037: Statement of Common Ground between Fareham Borough Council and Gosport Borough
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Jayson Grygiel, Manager of Planning Policy