

Fareham Borough Council Publication Plan Hearing

Matter 2: - Settlement Boundaries

Inspector's questions 3, 4 & 5

3. What is the justification for defining settlement boundaries?

4. Has the approach to reviewing and defining boundaries followed a robust process?

5. Will the settlement boundaries, combined with other policies and allocations, enable the Plan to meet the need for housing and employment whilst providing sufficient flexibility to adapt to change?

The justification for defining settlement boundaries is set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as follows:-

Fareham Borough Local Plan 2037 vision Page 23: *"Fareham Borough will retain its identity, including the identity of its individual settlements within the Borough, through measures that seek to retain the valued landscapes and settlement definition".*

Local Plan Strategic Priority 2 in the SEA: *In the first instance maximise development within the urban area and away from the valued landscapes and spaces that contribute to settlement definition.*

Enhancing the vitality and respect the Settlement Hierarchy SEA Page 67 *No proposed allocations were considered to result in negative impacts by competing with existing centres, although those at Warsash Greenaway Lane could slightly diminish the vitality of neighbouring areas through coalescence, thereby weakening local distinctiveness and sense of place.*

SEA Page 118. *The Meon, Brownwich and Hook valleys form the natural edge to settlement on the western edge of Fareham and the eastern and southern edges of the Western Wards and Warsash. These 'natural boundaries' are critical in maintaining a clear distinction between 'town and country' across the Borough and the separate, distinctive identity of individual settlements.*

The Inspector's question regarding whether a robust approach to reviewing and defining settlement boundaries was taken by the Council, can only be answered by comparing the aspirations above with the Council's actual treatment of the boundaries. Having identified the development sites within for example HA1, the Council overcame the fact they were in Countryside and outside of the urban boundary. The solution they applied was to move the boundaries to accommodate the identified sites. This approach is completely contrary to the SEA Strategic Priorities highlighted above.

Strategic Priorities form the link between the vision and the development strategy and are listed in Table 4.1. They are the objectives needed to fulfil the vision. As stated above the Council has failed to meet the objectives and therefore failed to fulfil the Plan 2037 vision.

To answer the Inspector's final question on settlement boundaries, despite many objections from members of the public, all were ignored, proving there is no flexibility in the Council's decision making process.

Matter 2 - Development in the Countryside

Inspector's questions 9 & 10

9. Criteria e) and f) link to the housing and employment development policies. Is there potential for conflict between these policies and unintended development in the countryside?

10. Is it clear to decision-makers, developers and local communities how proposals should demonstrate the requirement for a location outside of an urban area?

SEA Page 46 Paragraph 5.2.2. *“All strategic residential alternatives considered at the Draft Plan stage included Fareham Town Centre and other brownfield sites and greenfield clusters at Warsash Greenaway Lane”. “The limited availability of public open space around Brook Lane (Warsash) was raised”.*

SEA Page 1/14 *The LPR should consider measures to increase accessibility to open space in the Warsash - Greenaway Lane cluster, particularly around Brook Lane.*

This group’s response to Settlement Boundaries above applies equally to development in the countryside. To answer Inspector’s question 9 we feel there is most definitely a conflict between the Council’s need to develop and as evidenced in HA1, the fact that all of the sites making up HA1 are in the Countryside.

To answer Inspector’s question 10, the local community do not feel the requirement to build in the Countryside has been demonstrated and the need to do so is contrary to the SEA at Paragraph 6.4.3 which states that *“HP1 enables new homes to be brought forward in the countryside where this involves the conversion of an existing non-residential building, or a replacement dwelling of appropriate character”*. Also, SEA paragraph 6.6.11 states *“Proposed policies DS2 and DS3 are key to helping to reduce the scope for impacts by limiting the type of development coming forward in the countryside.”* Indeed this blatant conflict begs the question whether the Council are clear on the requirement for locations outside of an urban area.