

Fareham Local Plan

Proposal to remove Housing Allocation Policy: HA 55

Councillor Jim Forrest (Stubbington)

Allocation HA 55, south of Longfield Avenue, is a new salient into the Strategic Gap rather than a coherent extension of the urban area. It is in conflict with provisions of the *Technical Review of Areas of Special Landscape Quality and Strategic Gaps* and of the *Settlement Boundary Review*, both attached as background papers to the Local Plan.

The Technical Review says of the Fareham-Stubbington Strategic Gap: *“Some development in this area could be visually absorbed into the Gap without compromising the Gap function, on the understanding that a Green Infrastructure strategy be implemented, enhancing the extent of existing fragments of landscape type: Open coastal plain: Strong structure, to extend the green buffer between Stubbington settlement edge and the Strategic Gap.”*

Proposals from Hallam Land currently being considered, on a scale and design broadly consistent with the rubric for Allocation HA 55, are said to include provision to “maximise the open nature of the existing landscape”. But the “green infrastructure” indicated includes a high proportion of parkland, play space and a sports hub. These are characteristic of a residential area, not of an open coastal plain.

A large part of this green infrastructure is proposed to be sports pitches or playing fields, which are likely to lead to demand for floodlighting. Paragraph 38 of the Technical Review states: *“Strategic Gaps should feel relatively tranquil and have dark night skies.”* Domestic and street lighting for a 1,000-home development would in itself severely impact the dark sky area between southern Fareham and Stubbington. Floodlighting would totally destroy it.

This will transform much of the area into a bland, suburban landscape, rather than a stretch of mainly farmed countryside which changes with the seasons and with the nature of the crops rotated from year to year.

Allocation HA55 should also be viewed in conjunction with allocation HA54 (Oakcroft Lane near Crofton Cemetery) and with the Stubbington bypass, which will carry constant heavy traffic across the land between allocations HA54 and HA55, with a signal-controlled junction at Peak Lane. Taking these together, the Strategic Gap will shrink to a few metres around what will inevitably be a busy junction at all times of day.

Paragraph 38 of the Technical Review also states: *“Where there are key routes that run between the settlements, it should be possible to have a sense of leaving a settlement, passing through a distinct tract of countryside before entering another distinctly different settlement”*

At present, residents travelling between surrounding parts of Fareham, Stubbington, Hill Head and western Gosport benefit from a clear sense of separation, as they pass from one urban landscape, through a stretch of countryside and into another quite distinct settlement.

That sense of separation stands to be entirely lost: Allocation HA55 and its context are at odds with the Local Plan’s aspirations for “the conservation and enhancement of natural and historic landscapes and assets” (Paragraph 1.2).

It should therefore fail the test of soundness.

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