

Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2:
Development Sites and Policies Plan:
Submission Version January 2015

Submission by:
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On behalf of

Gauntlett Family

**Representations on Main Modifications proposed by Fareham
Borough Council**

The Development Sites and Policies Plan, Part 2, was submitted by Fareham Borough Council to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 23rd June 2014. As part of the independent examination, public hearings were held during November 2014 in which a number of issues relating to 'soundness' were identified by the Planning Inspector conducting the examination, Mr David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT. These issues were subsequently identified in the Inspector's Preliminary Findings letter which requested that the Council address these issues through Main Modifications to the Development Sites and Policies Plan.

The 34 Main Modifications that are proposed by the Council to address these issues have now been published for further consultation during the period from Monday 16th February to 5:00pm on Monday 30th March 2015.

This submission is made in response to that consultation

DMM1and DMM21

The Fareham Borough Council is proceeding on the basis that it is completing the local plan by meeting the housing requirements set out in the adopted Core Strategy.

However, it has already been recognized and acknowledged that the Core Strategy, Part 1 Plan, is not based on objectively assessed need as required by the NPPF. An appeal for housing development outside the urban boundary has already been allowed because *the Council does not have a five year housing land supply based on the requirement from the only NPPF*

compliant assessment of need currently available, the South Hampshire Strategic Market Housing Assessment. - (APP/A1720/A/14/2220031 Land adjacent to 'The Navigator', off Swanwick Lane, Lower Swanwick, Hampshire.)

The Council proposes to deal with the failure of the Core Strategy and LP Part 2 to meet the objectively assessed housing need by an offer of an "early review" of the whole Local Plan. This "offer" is similar to the approach taken by Eastleigh Borough Council which was not accepted by the Local Plan Examination Inspector who stated in his report dated 11th February 2015:

15. The Borough Council see this new Strategy as the appropriate means to address the spatial response to the PUSH SHMA 2014 and to determine housing needs and requirements at a Borough level. Accordingly, it has already included in its Local Development Scheme (LDS) a review of the Local Plan to be published in 2016 to respond to the new Strategy. This intention shows a commendable commitment to co-operative working in the future. I recognise that a planned review can be a relevant consideration in assessing the soundness of a plan. However, the planned review is at least two years away and the timetable for the finalisation of the new PUSH Strategy could easily slip, given the number of authorities involved and the complex and potentially controversial issues it needs to address. Similarly, the long gestation period of the current Local Plan inevitably raises uncertainty over the Council's ability to deliver a review so tightly aligned to the finalisation of the new PUSH Strategy.

16. Accordingly, I consider that for the short/medium term at least, this Local Plan should seek to meet the expectations of the Framework and any significant shortcomings should be addressed now and not be postponed to the review. A planned review cannot make an unsound plan sound.

It should be recognised that the preparation of the Fareham L P2 has been even more protracted than the Eastleigh Local Plan; the draft Site Allocations Plan and draft Fareham Town Centre Area Action Plan, went through an Issues & Options stage of public consultation in 2008.

The timetable for preparation of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review, set out in DMM1, is wildly optimistic and based on what is now clearly an unrealistic timetable for preparation of the new South Hampshire Strategy. The timeline formulated has little regard to the breadth and depth of work and stakeholder/community engagement which will be required and has been formulated with only one aim, that is, **to persuade the LP 2 Inspector that this version of the local plan can be found "sound"**.

The update report on the progress of the PUSH Spatial Strategy 2016-2036, presented to the PUSH Joint Committee on the 24th March 2015 states, for the first time, that a "public" consultation will be carried out in July to September 2015. This will be 'broad brush', setting out broad conceptual options for distributing development. It will not be locationally specific, and will not include housing targets for individual authorities. One might question the degree to which the consultees will appreciate the "high level" nature of the consultation documents

because they will certainly wish to understand the locational impacts of allocations and indeed the justifications for overall housing need in the PUSH region.

The consultation on the PUSH Strategy, with housing numbers for each authority, will not start until early 2016, but the timetable suggests that this is to be carried out, amendments made, re-consulted upon and the Strategy adopted in March 2016.

This is a totally unrealistic timetable for all of the most controversial work on the Strategy unless it is seen by PUSH as merely an exercise in telling people what it, PUSH, has already decided with no scope for change and without requisite and meaningful disclosure and engagement with communities who will be significantly impacted.

Gosport Borough Council's representations to its Local Plan Examination Inspector (GBC 1.1) which demonstrates why the magnitude of development proposed in the South Hampshire SHMA is not achievable, illustrate the difficulties that PUSH has yet to address.

The Eastleigh Local Plan Inspector also recognised the potential for delay in the PUSH work in his report:

20. The PUSH authorities clearly have the structure in place and a commitment to working together in the future as they have done in the past. The PUSH structure and the work it has produced and intends to produce demonstrate an admirable co-operative approach. But the process is time-consuming and there is a danger of building-in delay to local plans. This is why it is essential that this Plan responds as fully as possible to the identified needs of Eastleigh Borough.

The basis for Fareham's planning strategy for the past 10 years, which has been wholly politically driven, is to accommodate virtually all further housing developments in Welborne and within the presently tightly defined urban edge, with no additional greenfield development elsewhere in the Borough.

It is most unlikely that Fareham's leading politicians will readily accept that some of Gosport's shortfall could/should be accommodated within Fareham Borough as this would require additional greenfield development.

The situation is likely to be similar in other parts of the PUSH area and a long and protracted process to agree district figures is almost inevitable. This process should be fully transparent and subject to community consultation, unlike the entire process adopted by PUSH to date in connection with the present round of Local Plans.

A further example is the effective "embargo" on new development allocation within southern Havant borough, Hayling Island, unless and until a coastal flooding and protection strategy can be identified and funded.

The Eastleigh Local Plan Inspector report also recognised that a shortfall in supply is emerging across the PUSH area. He states:

17. The Council estimates (EBC/H1 Table 5.1) that existing local plans covering the Southampton HMA are proposing to deliver nearly enough housing to meet the SHMA's recommended need for the period 2011-2026, with a shortfall averaging 50 dpa (750 dwellings overall). Of the Councils covering at least part of this area, only Test Valley has not got an adopted plan in place for this period. Southampton City is the largest single provider of housing within the HMA and Eastleigh Borough is second. The contributions from the other authorities are much smaller, reflecting that only parts of those authorities are in the PUSH area and the Southampton HMA. The current shortfall estimated by the Council for the Portsmouth HMA is much greater at nearly 500 dpa (EBC/H1 Table 5.2).

19. It is a legitimate role for the PUSH strategy, as an expression of the Duty to Co-operate, to assign all unmet needs within the HMA beyond 2026 and, if required, between the 2 HMAs. Provided that a new PUSH Strategy is finalised in 2016 there would be sufficient time for all plan reviews to roll forward provision on the agreed basis from 2026. The difficulty is with the modest shortfall emerging in the short/medium term, as the timing of the PUSH Strategy and subsequent reviews of plans will unacceptably delay that shortfall being addressed. I consider this further below after considering the JGC Study.

The modest shortfall he recognised was the 50 dpa in the Southampton HMA, whereas the evidence Eastleigh provided shows that there is a much more significant shortfall in the Portsmouth HMA of 500dpa. In Fareham a shortfall in provision against the PUSH identified requirement of 395 dpa has developed rapidly since 2011 and so that, using the completion figures from the housing trajectory in Appendix G, it now exceeds 600 dwellings.

The Eastleigh Inspector's report concludes that the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan has a number of shortcomings in relation to housing need, the identified housing requirement and housing supply which are sufficient on their own to recommend non-adoption of the Plan.

The situation in Fareham is different to Eastleigh in that Fareham has an adopted Core Strategy, but there can be no doubt that if the present Core Strategy was subject to examination now it would be found to be "unsound" because of its shortcomings in relation to housing need, the identified housing requirement and housing supply.

Whilst it is possible that LP Part2, as proposed to be modified, could be considered to be sound and could be adopted this would not offer any help to address the already known and identified shortcomings. As in Eastleigh, addressing the shortcomings would require a fundamental change in approach to the spatial strategy set out in the Core Strategy Part 1 Plan.

The Fareham Borough Core Strategy, Part 1 Plan, indicated a requirement upon the council to undertake a review of the existing urban edge in connection with the identification of a range of potential development opportunities to meet future housing need. The council has submitted to Inspector Hogger a “watered down” version, suggesting that the undertaking given to the Part 1 Plan inspector who examined the Core Strategy for soundness was “only if required to meet housing needs”. That is not the wording of the Core Strategy and does not fulfil the obligation on this council to undertake such a genuine review of those boundaries.

Fareham as a council and as a constituent member of PUSH has known of the growing and unmet housing need for many years. As such, it cannot be allowed to deny knowledge of the arising conflict as between its Core Strategy and its emerging Part 2 Plan housing provision.

It has offered, through this Part 2 Plan, a range of “potential urban area sites” for housing development but one cannot ignore the fact that very many of these, notably those within the town centre, are highly unlikely to come forward within the Plan period, if at all.

The identities are highly questionable and their omission will impact negatively on the Plan and its delivery of a suitable range of housing opportunities and serve only to exacerbate the already known shortfall. The definition of many as “Available”, “Developable” and “Deliverable” is highly questionable and the viability assessments undertaken by the council’s external consultants fail to recognise or detail the potential for failure to deliver.

Adoption of LP2 now would not provide any benefit in the provision of housing because most of the dwellings to be provided already have permission and development has commenced.

Adoption is likely to result in the removal of any incentive for the Council to prepare the new Local Plan as soon as possible.

It would be a better use of resources if the Council starts preparation of the new plan for the period to 2036 now by **properly assessing all of the potential housing sites that have already been identified.**

If it is decided to complete the adoption of LP2 it would be inappropriate to refer to the CS in the policy DSP40 as this will certainly result in a 2-3 year delay in addressing the shortcomings. The new text at the end of DSP40 should be revised by deleting the words ‘Core Strategy (excluding Welborne)’ and replacing them with ‘South Hampshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment /PUSH Spatial Strategy 2016-2036’.

The reference to ‘housing targets in the Core Strategy’ in the first line of the new text for page 85 should be deleted and replaced by ‘objectively assessed housing need in accordance with the NPPF’.

The reference to the ‘Core Strategy housing targets’ in the final line of the first new paragraph for page 85 should be deleted and replaced by ‘objectively assessed housing need’.

The proposed second paragraph for new txt for page 85 should be deleted.

In relation to DMM1, the following new first bullet point should be added:

- Summer 2015 – preparation of draft plan including assessment of potential housing sites to meet the requirements of the NPPF'

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30th March 2015.

