

# Comment on the Draft Fareham Local Plan 2036

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**Bargate Homes Ltd**

**Land West of Old Street, Stubbington**

**Representations on Draft Fareham Local  
Plan 2036**

**December 2017**

## Document control

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Appendix 1 Illustrative Masterplan

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by WYG on behalf of Bargate Homes Limited who control land to the west of Old Street, Stubbington (SHLAA ID 31) and focus on those parts of the draft Local Plan that are of particular relevance to our client's interests in that regard.
- 1.2 An outline planning application for the development of up to 160 dwellings and open space at this site has recently been submitted to Fareham Borough Council. A copy of the Illustrative Masterplan that forms part of the application is included at Appendix 1.



## 2.0 Policy H1: Strategic Housing Provision

### National Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 Before considering the soundness of Policy H1, it is necessary to set out the national planning policy context within which this key housing policy is to be delivered.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 Government policy is explicit in requiring local planning authorities to significantly increase their supply of housing. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF is explicit that: *'To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period'*.

#### National Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.3 The NPPG also advises at paragraph 035 Reference ID: 3-035-20140306 that: *'Local planning authorities should aim to deal with any undersupply within the first 5 years of the plan period where possible. Where this cannot be met in the first 5 years, local planning authorities will need to work with neighbouring authorities under the duty to cooperate'* (NPPG Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 3-035-20140306).
- 2.4 This commitment has recently been reinforced as part of the Government's Budget announcement in November 2017 where the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed that housebuilding is the "number one priority" in the Budget and set a target of delivering 300,000 homes per year.

#### Housing White Paper: Fixing our broken housing market - February 2017

- 2.5 This White Paper sets out how the planning system is failing to deliver sufficient housing to meet needs. It proposes a number of measures to boost the level and speed of delivery of housing. These include:

- *'Ensuring that plans start from an honest assessment of the need for new homes, and that local authorities work with their neighbours, so that difficult decisions are not ducked.'*
- *'Holding local authorities to account through a new housing delivery test'.*

Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals - September 2017

- 2.6 This consultation document sets out a number of proposals to reform the planning system to increase the supply of new homes and increase local authority capacity to manage growth. A key proposal, which has been carried forward from the Housing White Paper, is the introduction of a standard method for calculating local authorities' housing need. Whilst this is not yet national planning policy, it is noteworthy that the indicative assessment of housing need based upon the proposed formula between 2016 to 2026 is 531 dwellings per annum (dpa) for Fareham Borough. This is an increase of 111 dpa over the current local assessment of housing need.
- 2.7 It is therefore clear that the Government is committed to delivering housing in the short term to meet identified need and that local authorities are expected to take pro-active measures to positively plan for such needs.

**Housing Target**

- 2.8 In order to assess the proposed strategic housing provision proposed through Policy H1, it is necessary to consider the background to how the housing target has been derived and in particular two key planning appeal decisions from 2015 and 2017 where the Council's housing need and land supply position was thoroughly explored.
- 2.9 Table H1 of the draft Local Plan states that the Local Plan housing target is 11,300 dwellings broken down as 455 dwellings between 2011 and 2034 (as derived from the PUSH Spatial Position Statement, June 2016) and 420 dwellings between 2034 and 2036 (as derived from the PUSH SHMA). Having accepted that the 2016 Position Update figure of 455 dpa is an appropriate target for the first 23 years of the Plan period, the Council

should continue to use this figure for the final two years of the Plan, extending the overall target by 70 dwellings to 11,370 dwellings.

- 2.10 We also note that the PUSH Position Statement expects there to be a shortfall of 6,300 dwellings across the mainland authorities until 2034. This shortfall will need to be addressed prior to submission of the Plan in order fulfil the duty to co-operate. The housing requirement should be further increased to seek to address part of this shortfall and to boost housing supply in accordance with Government policy and recent announcements as set out above.
- 2.11 The following section sets out the recent planning appeal decisions which are important considerations in establishing the pressing need for the delivery of housing in the short term.

The Navigator, Swanwick – Appeal Decision (January 2015)

- 2.12 This was the first appeal to test FBC's housing land supply position (PINS ref: APP/A1720/A/14/2220031). WYG acted on behalf of the appellant and successfully argued that the Council's approach was fundamentally flawed in that they were assessing their 5YHLS position on the basis of the Local Plan and not the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). It was therefore surprising to find that FBC persisted with this approach in refusing subsequent residential applications including the application for up to 120 dwellings at Cranleigh Road in Portchester.
- 2.13 Shortly after the Navigator Decision, the Local Plan Inspector published his report into the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2). He considered that it was not the role of the LPP2 to consider strategic matters such as housing and employment needs, but recognised that the Council had committed to commencing an early review of the Local Plan to seek to address emerging evidence from PUSH on OAHN at that time. This committed the Council to a timetable which included consultation on the draft Local Plan in Summer 2016 and adoption in Spring/Summer 2018. This timetable has been pushed back considerably with the first consultation on the draft Local Plan currently taking place and adoption not anticipated until Summer 2019 at the earliest, over a year past the adoption

date committed to in the LPP2. In the meantime, housing supply has failed to meet need (as confirmed by the Cranleigh Road appeal detailed below) and we submit that the draft Local Plan fails to address the ongoing shortfall in a timely manner as explained further below.

Cranleigh Road, Portchester – Appeal Decision (August 2017)

- 2.14 The Inspector at the recent planning appeal at land north of Cranleigh Road in Portchester (PINS ref: APP/A1720/W/3156244) confirmed that the 5YHLS requirement for the Borough should be based upon OAHN (420 dwellings per annum (dpa) as set out in the PUSH Spatial Position Update, June 2016), rather than the lower and out-of-date existing Local Plan Part 1 target; the same principle as that adopted by the Navigator Inspector.
- 2.15 On that basis, the Inspector went on to conclude that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5YHLS and the available supply is well below the 5-year threshold at 'marginally over 2 years'; a position that has recently been accepted by FBC in their Planning Committee Report dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. This finding correlates with Scenario 5 of the appellant's 'Proof of Evidence Relating to Housing Land Supply Matters' by Wolf Bond Planning which identifies a supply of 2.1 years which equates to a shortfall of 1,615 dwellings between 2016 and 2021. Allowing for the delivery of the Cranleigh Road proposal (up to 120 dwellings), this shortfall reduces to 1,495 dwellings. This shortfall includes an historic under-supply of 590 dwellings (see Table 3 of Proof) between 2011/12 and 2015/16: OAHN (2,100) – completions (1,510) = 590. It is understood that the completions for 2016/17 were 349 dwellings (71 below OAHN) extending the historic under-supply to 661 dwellings: OAHN (2,450) – completions (1,859) = 661.

**Stepped Annual Rate of Housing Delivery and the Delivery of Welborne**

- 2.16 The Council agreed in the Statement of Common Ground for the Cranleigh Road appeal that *'it is agreed that the Sedgefield methodology should be applied with any shortfall to be met in the current five year period'*. Scenario 5 of the appellant's Proof of Evidence (2.1yrs supply), which correlates with the Inspector's conclusion on the 5YHLS shortfall,

applies the Sedgefield methodology so it appears that the Inspector also agreed that this was the correct methodology.

- 2.17 It is therefore surprising to find that the Council are back-loading the housing delivery in the draft Local Plan (Policy H1). The proposed delivery rate does not plan to even start to meet the historic under-supply until 2021/22 so is not even in accordance with the Liverpool methodology which requires that the under-supply is met over the remaining years of the Plan. Furthermore, the rate of delivery over the next four years of the Plan (420 dpa) is below the Local Plan target of 455 dpa between 2011 and 2034 set out in Table H1.
- 2.18 The rationale for the stepped approach to delivery appears to be that Welborne and other large housing allocations will take several years to complete and *'will result in a natural delivery of homes focused in the middle and latter points of the plan period'* (paragraph 5.6 of draft Local Plan), although no detailed housing trajectory for sites other than Welborne is set out in the Plan.
- 2.19 This approach does not accord with firm guidance from the Government which states that *'Local planning authorities should aim to deal with any undersupply within the first 5 years of the plan period where possible. Where this cannot be met in the first 5 years, local planning authorities will need to work with neighbouring authorities under the duty to cooperate'* (NPPG Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 3-035-20140306). The choice is not between Sedgefield and Liverpool but between Sedgefield and redistributing the supply to other neighbouring authorities. However, re-distribution is not necessary as there are adequate sites in the Borough to deliver housing in the short term including my client's site at Old Street, Stubbington.
- 2.20 It is inappropriate to suppress the short term delivery of housing, or at least lower the expectation of delivery, based primarily upon the reliance of expected delivery of Welborne in the longer term, particularly given the repeated failure of Welborne to deliver at the Council's predicted rates and the significant constraints which affect its delivery.

- 2.21 The PUSH Housing Market Assessment of 2005 set a figure of 10,000 homes to be delivered at the North Fareham SDA (Welborne). The 2011 Core Strategy subsequently referred to Welborne delivering 6,500-7,500 dwellings over the plan period 2006-2026. The Welborne Plan (June 2015) makes provision for a lower figure of 6,000 dwellings up to 2036. The most recent Welborne delivery strategy set out in the Background Paper: Updating the Welborne Plan (October 2017) further revises the delivery rate downwards to 3,840 dwellings within the new longer Plan period (to 2036). The clear trend is therefore of significantly reduced housing provision and continual delays in delivery.
- 2.22 Whilst an outline planning application has been submitted for up to 6,000 dwellings at Welborne, there are numerous objections including those from consultees including: the Environment Agency; Sport England; HCC Highways; the Local Lead Flood Authority and; the HSE who would *'advise against the whole Welborne development due to concerns over proposed development within close proximity to a Major Accident Hazard Pipeline'*.
- 2.23 Furthermore, the evidence base document 'Welborne Garden Village: A Delivery Trajectory for Welborne' sets out that *'The timing of the delivery of infrastructure could have a significant impact on the delivery of Welborne, with many of the details still to be defined. This is particularly important for the new motorway junction as this is critical in allowing the development to expand beyond c. 1,500 dwellings. In all, there are a number of uncertainties that at the current juncture are still to be resolved...'*
- 2.24 The Cranleigh Road Inspector clearly shared the concerns about the delivery, stating *'Whilst I acknowledge the lpa's commitment to the delivery of Welbourne, on the evidence before me, it would appear that the potential to deliver a significant number of units towards the end of the 5-year period is optimistic'*. However, the Council continue to contend that Welborne will start delivering dwellings in 2020/21 (140 dpa), despite the Inspector's conclusion that no dwellings are likely to be delivered in this period, as per the 2.1YHLS position (Scenario 5 of the appellant's Proof of Evidence).
- 2.25 Given the repeated failure of Welborne to deliver at projected rates and the significant constraints and uncertainties that are associated with both the site and the scale of the proposals, we consider that the delivery rate of 3,840 dwellings proposed within EV20 is

overly optimistic and that it is likely that delivery will be pushed back such that the delivery from Welborne over the Plan period is reduced. For every year that the programme slips, 250 dwellings would be pushed out of the Plan period. In particular, we agree with the Cranleigh Road Inspector that Welborne will not start delivering in 2020/21 and as such the 340 dwellings in the current five year period should not be relied upon in assessing housing land supply and setting Local Plan housing targets.

- 2.26 The Council's SHLAA has demonstrated that it is entirely possible for the Council to allocate more smaller scale housing sites which are deliverable in the short term in line with the Sedgefield methodology and guidance in the NPPG. My client's land to the west of Old Street, Stubbington has no significant constraints to delivery and could be delivered within the next five years with a build out rate of 40 dpa between 2018/19 and 2021/22. As such, it should be allocated for the residential development of up to 160 dwellings in order to boost significantly the supply of housing in accordance with paragraph 47 of the NPPF and National Planning Policy Guidance. The delivery rates over the next four years should be increased by at least 661 dwellings (approximately 165 dpa), to address the historic under-supply identified above in a timely manner.

### **Windfall Development**

- 2.27 We also have concerns about the level of windfall development relied upon in Policy H1 and set out in Table DA1. The number of windfall sites coming forward is likely to decrease as they normally comprise previously developed land which is of finite supply. At almost 14% (1,320 dwellings) of the future planned housing delivery in the draft Local Plan, this is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of a plan led approach to the delivery of housing.
- 2.28 For all of the above reasons, the Local Plan housing target should be increased significantly the delivery rate in the early part of the remaining plan period increased to address unmet needs that have already been identified in the PUSH area whilst also meeting the historic under-supply within five years as required by NPPG.

### **3.0 Policy DA1: Development Allocations**

- 3.1 For the reasons set out above, Policy H1 fails to meet the housing needs for the Borough in a timely manner and the housing numbers planned for in the early part of the Plan period should be increased. Land at Old Street, Stubbington (SHLAA ID 31) should be allocated for the development of 160 dwellings and added to Table DA3 (pg 116) to help meet this shortfall. Note that there are two tables named 'Table DA2' in the draft Local Plan – we assume the table on page 116 should be labelled Table DA3.
- 3.2 An outline planning application for the development of up to 160 dwellings, open space and access has recently been submitted to FBC. This is supported by a raft of technical and environmental reports which demonstrate that there are no significant constraints to bringing the site forward for development in the short term and that the proposals can deliver a number of social, economic and environmental benefits in accordance with the NPPF. In particular, we would draw attention to the following key points which favour the allocation of this site for development.

#### **Sustainable Location**

- 3.3 The site immediately adjoins the defined settlement boundary for Stubbington which runs along the rear boundaries of properties along Knights Bank Road to the south and along the opposite side of Old Street to the east.
- 3.4 The site is sustainably located being well connected to local facilities and public transport and within walking and cycling distance of key services including schools, retail and leisure facilities. A schedule of services and facilities located within an accessible distance from the site is detailed within Figure 3.4 and Table 3.3 of the Transport Assessment which accompanies the planning application (all distances represent the most direct walking routes).
- 3.5 With regards to transport accessibility, the site is well served in terms of road connectivity and public transport routes. Bus stops on Plymouth Drive, the closest of which is approximately 80m from the site, provide links to Fareham Town Centre and Fareham



Railway Station with a journey time of approximately 30 minutes. There are regular services from the train station to destinations including London, Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton.

- 3.6 There are a range of primary and secondary schools within Stubbington. Crofton Hammond Junior School and Crofton Anne Dale Junior School lie within 1,400m walking distance from the site and Crofton Secondary School is within 2,200m.
- 3.7 Stubbington Medical Practice lies approximately 1,500m walking distance to the east of the site. There are numerous public open spaces and recreation facilities within approximately 1,600m including Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve immediately to the west as well as Stubbington Recreation Ground, Seaford Park, Salterns Park, Stubbington Community Centre and Stubbington Library. Beaches, sailing clubs and cafes lie within approximately 1,100m at the seafront to the south.
- 3.8 There is a range of employment opportunities in the local area including Solent Enterprise Zone, Newgate Lane and Speedfields Park, HMS Collingwood and numerous businesses along Fareham Road to the east.
- 3.9 A range of shops, takeaways, restaurants and pubs are located at Stubbington Green local centre approximately 1,500m from the site. These include Co-operative and Iceland supermarkets and a Lloyds Bank.
- 3.10 In addition, the Hampshire Townscape Assessment 2010 identifies two sub-areas adjacent to the site (02b Hill Head and 02e Old Street and Marks Tey Road Environs). In this document, sub-area 02b is described as having *'Excellent access and connectivity, particularly to the seafront'* whilst sub-area 02e is described as having *'Good access and connectivity throughout with a series of footpaths and pedestrian lanes linking houses and linking areas to each other and to sub-areas beyond'*.

### **Sensitive Design Approach**

- 3.11 The Illustrative Masterplan which accompanies the outline application (see Appendix 1) follows a biodiversity and landscape led approach to ensure that the proposals respect the

neighbouring Nature Reserve as well as the character of the adjoining settlement. The proposals seek to deliver a very significant area of open space which, at approximately 5.5ha, amounts to over half the total site area. This will primarily perform a function as a biodiversity area intended to act as an extension to the Nature Reserve habitat at the western part of the site. It will however also deliver a mix of natural greenspace, formal amenity space and children's play space.

- 3.12 Furthermore, built development has been set back from Old Street, reflecting the characteristics of the existing built development at this part of the settlement where dwellings are generally set back from the road with green space in front. This also allows for extensive landscaping and tree planting to soften the impact of development upon Old Street. The number of proposed dwellings fronting this landscaped strip is similar to that on the opposite side of Old Street thereby ensuring a grain of development that is in keeping with that which currently exists along this primary frontage.
- 3.13 Green corridors are proposed which will maintain a visual link between the existing key viewpoints along Old Street and the countryside / Solent beyond.
- 3.14 The children's play area is intentionally positioned close to Old Street so that it is readily accessible to existing residents. Indeed, the provision of significant areas of open space will encourage the interaction of new and existing residents and will provide both social and visual links thereby helping the development to be well integrated with Stubbington.

### **Short Term Delivery**

- 3.15 With regards to site delivery, there are no significant site constraints that would prevent it being delivered quickly. It is anticipated that the site is capable of delivering 40 dwellings per year between 2018/19 and 2021/22. This would allow adequate time for the outline and reserved matters planning application to be approved, legal agreements to be signed and conditions discharged with delivery starting in 2018/19.
- 3.16 Bargate Homes is an owner operated regional housebuilder which has grown significantly in recent years and in the last year delivered about 130 homes across Dorset, Hampshire and West Sussex.

- 3.17 When seeking planning permissions on their sites this is with the intention of building them out as soon as is feasibly possible, unlike certain Applicants, who only promote land and sell onto housebuilders once an outline consent is obtained.
- 3.18 The business is run by a Board of Directors which are 'hands-on' in their involvement in the day to day running of the company. They are backed by the Prowting Family (who formerly owned Banner Homes) and by a £25 million Revolving Credit Facility (RCF) with the Royal Bank of Scotland which enables them to deliver sites in a timely way with no 'landbanking'.
- 3.19 The site can therefore deliver housing within the next five years to address the past under-supply in a timely manner in accordance with Government guidance.

### **Environment, Traffic and Amenity**

- 3.20 A request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended) was submitted for this site on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017. The Council issued their decision on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and advised that for the purposes of the Regulations, the proposed development is not considered likely to have a significant effect on the environment and does not constitute EIA development.
- 3.21 Full ecological surveys have been undertaken and have informed the Illustrative Masterplan design and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures. Furthermore, Natural England has, through discussions at the pre-application stage, confirmed that *'By adopting the approach to extend the nature reserve, and with the correct size, design and long-term management, it is our view that the proposals could conserve and enhance biodiversity at the site and the proposals could support the adjacent NNR, rather than representing any significant constraint'* (see Natural England letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 at Appendix 2). The outline application proposals commit to this approach and include a long term Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan and it is therefore considered that the development of this site will not have any unacceptable environmental impacts.

- 3.22 Full details of the transport impact of the proposed development are set out within the Transport Assessment that accompanies the outline application. With regards to traffic implications, HCC Highways were consulted as part of the pre-application process. No 'in principle' objections relating to traffic implications were received and amendments to the site access have been made in response to discussions at this early stage. It is therefore, considered that the development of the site would not have any unacceptable impact in transport terms.
- 3.23 The outline application proposals demonstrate how the site could be sensitively designed to respect the amenities of existing residents with adequate back to back / back to side distances provided and landscape buffers retained / enhanced. In particular, proposed dwellings along Old Street are set well back from the road ensuring generous separation distances from the existing dwellings opposite with landscaping in between.

#### **Contribution towards Open Space Deficiency**

- 3.24 As set out in the adopted Local Plan and paragraph 8.34 of the draft Local Plan, there are deficiencies in open space in the Hill Head and Stubbington wards. The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how the proposed development could deliver approximately 5.5ha of open space, 4.2ha in excess of the policy requirement in the adopted Local Plan and well above that required in the draft Local Plan. This is a significant social and environmental benefit.
- 3.25 Our client has been in discussions with Hampshire County Council who have provisionally expressed interest in taking over the ownership and management of the biodiversity area as an extension to the Nature Reserve habitat. It is understood that HCC previously tried to purchase the land for that purpose when it was on the market.

#### **Affordable Housing and Self and Custom Build Homes**

- 3.26 The site can deliver a material amount of affordable housing in accordance with planning policy and Vivid Homes have already been appointed as the affordable housing delivery partner for the site.

- 3.27 Notwithstanding the points raised in section 6 of these representations, we note that Local Plan Policy H7 proposes that sites of 100 dwellings or more include 5% serviced plots for self or custom build needs. As part of the planning application at this site Bargate Homes have agreed to consider such provision as part of the development of the site.

### **Economic Benefits**

- 3.28 The proposed development would provide significant direct and indirect benefits. In the short term, jobs will be created during the construction phase. In the longer term, an increased local population will raise expenditure levels in the area contributing to its vitality and viability. Fareham Borough Council will also receive significant New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments.
- 3.29 For the above reasons, the site can deliver sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and can make a meaningful contribution towards housing supply in the Borough in the short-term. As such it should be allocated for the residential development of 160 dwellings in Policy DA1 and added to the list of sites in Table DA3.

## **4.0 Policy H2: Provision of Affordable Housing**

- 4.1 Paragraph 173 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that plans should not set out obligations that would threaten the viability of the sites and scale of development that is being proposed in the plan.
- 4.2 Policy H2 is aligned with national policy as set out within the written Ministerial Statement of 28th November 2014 and paragraph 31 of Planning Practice Guidance (ref: 23b-031-20161116), in that affordable housing is only sought on development of 11 units or more. The justification behind the national policy is clear; it seeks to ease the disproportionate burden of developer contributions on small scale developer, thereby encouraging more small and medium scale house builders to improve competition and variety. The acknowledgement of this national policy requirement in Policy H2 is supported by Bargate Homes.
- 4.3 In addition, the requirement for 30% affordable housing provision as set out within Policy H2 is well evidenced by the Local Plan Viability Assessment which is considered robust. The acknowledgement of viability within Policy H2 is welcomed and enables the policy to be operated with a suitable degree of flexibility where the need for that is robustly justified.
- 4.4 However, policy requirement a) which necessitates the provision of 10% of the overall dwellings on site as affordable home ownership products is somewhat ambiguous. The supporting text to the policy at paragraph 5.19 seems to suggest that this 10% provision is for starter homes and it is not clear from the current wording of the policy how this requirement affects the provision of other more traditional affordable tenures including shared ownership. Paragraph 5.18 identifies a notional 65:35 affordable rent to affordable home ownership products which is derived from the PUSH SHMA, but which appears to exclude starter home provision. Bargate Homes supports the inclusion of starter homes within the definition of affordable housing under Policy H2 but requires greater clarity on the split of tenures sought by the policy.



- 4.5 Policy H2 is consistent with national policy, it is well evidenced and provides a suitable degree of flexibility and it is therefore considered generally sound, subject to greater clarity on the housing tenure requirements.

## **5.0 Policy H4: Adaptable and Accessible Housing**

- 5.1 Bargate Homes agree with paragraph 5.39 that the viability implications of the category 3 optional standard for wheelchair accessible homes should be fully tested in advance of the plan being adopted. This is because the cost implications of this standard are likely to have implications on the viability of development proposals and therefore the ability to deliver necessary affordable homes and infrastructure requirements. Without such evidence, this part of the policy should be deleted.



## **6.0 Policy H7: Self and Custom Build Homes**

- 6.1 Custom build and self-build development is an important part of the Government's agenda to widen the choice of homes and encourage greater variety by supporting small and medium size housebuilders. The need for self and custom build plots is recorded through registers kept by Councils and a duty has been placed on LPAs to grant planning permission to satisfy this need in full. The need identified on FBC's register has not been factored into the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) reported in the GL Hearn April 2016 update report. Whilst there may be some overlap between the need identified on the register and the OAHN, based upon the evidence provided in support of the draft Local Plan the assumption should be that the need for self/custom build is distinct from the OAHN as a specialist form of housing.
- 6.2 On this basis, Policy H7 is therefore flawed. By requiring 5% of plots to be provided on all sites over 100 units as self/custom build this may have the implication of diminishing the contribution of such sites towards satisfying the full OAHN. There is also the risk that Policy H7 could leave a significant number of self-build plots empty if the demand for such development does not exist or if those on the register do not have the ability to build their own homes.
- 6.3 The report prepared by Adams Hendry in January 2017 considering self and custom build housing need in Fareham identifies a need for 20 plots at a specific point in time. However, this is demonstrably out-of-date with Fareham Borough Council's self-build register currently identifying a total need for 97 plots. The evidence base supporting the Local Plan is therefore out-of-date and does not accurately reflect the total need for self/custom build housing land.
- 6.4 The requirements of Policy H7 are therefore arbitrary, and are not properly evidenced. It is considered that the policy is too blunt and may negatively impact the ability of Fareham Borough Council to meet its objectively assessed needs. Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Plans to be flexible and able to adapt to rapid change. Self/custom building housing is a dynamic housing need that can vary considerably year-on-year and therefore a more dynamic policy is required that enables

the requisite amount of self/custom build development land to come forward without prejudicing the Council's ability to meet its OAHN.

- 6.5 It is not clear whether the Council have considered alternative approaches to the delivery of self-build plots. It is important that the Council examines all options in line with PPG before placing additional burdens on the development industry, which may have the unintended consequence of prejudicing the Council's ability to meet its full OAHN. The PPG also sets out in paragraph 57-025 that the Council should seek to encourage landowners to consider the provision of self-build plots and facilitate access where they are interested. The approach taken by the Council clearly goes beyond encouragement as it requires the provision of plots.
- 6.6 If the Council consider that a quota based policy is the preferred approach to satisfying the self/custom build need in Fareham, and provided that it can be demonstrated that this would not affect the Council's ability to satisfy its OAHN in full, then a more flexible approach should be adopted. For example, the proportion of plots being brought forward as self-build should only reflect the need demonstrated on the register. This should also factor in locational choice as clearly demand exhibited in one part of the Borough is specific to that location and it would be unreasonable to expect those on the register to satisfy their need elsewhere. If a specific quota is applied then this should be regarded as a starting point for negotiations and with the relevant caveat that such a requirement could be set aside or reduced on the grounds of viability.

## 7.0 Policy SP6: Development in Strategic Gaps

- 7.1 We do not consider that the Strategic Gap designation at land west of Old Street is necessary because the open nature and sense of separation between the settlements of Stubbington and Titchfield can be effectively retained by other nature conservation designations.
- 7.2 The impact upon the Strategic Gap and Countryside (as designated in the adopted and draft Local Plans) is fully considered within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal which accompanies the planning application for this site. This concludes that the proposals would not create any major adverse long term landscape effects on landscape character within the gap or on visual receptors' perception of the gap.
- 7.3 The presence of the nature conservation designations to the west including Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve and the SINC to its north effectively prevent the settlements of Stubbington and Titchfield from coalescing as the policies protecting these areas prevent them from being developed. The Fareham Borough Gap Review (2012) confirmed that the gap designation is necessary where, *'The open nature and sense of separation between settlements cannot be retained by other policy designations'*. As such, we consider that a Strategic Gap designation for this part of the Meon Valley (Policy SP6) should be deleted from the draft Local Plan.
- 7.4 However, if the Council / Local Plan Inspector consider that the gap designation should remain, we would stress the following points.
- 7.5 When considering the gap, it is important to consider the experience of travelling between the two settlements that the gap is intended to prevent from coalescing (Titchfield and Stubbington). There is no direct route between these settlements as the Nature Reserve is located in between. To travel between the settlements, either in a vehicle, on foot, as an equestrian or as a cyclist requires travelling into the urban area of Stubbington and heading north to Bridge Street to cross the Meon Valley into Titchfield. Alternatively, heading south back into Hill Head before crossing the Meon Valley at Hillhead Harbour and the southern extents of the Nature Reserve. For pedestrians, the nearest public footpath crossing the Meon Valley is at Hillhead Harbour

to the south or public footpath 084/49/2 which crosses the River Meon 1.5km north of the site. The perception of the gap is therefore diminished as one must travel through the urban area to travel between the settlements. The route of travel and the perception of the separate identities of Titchfield and Stubbington would not change as a result of the proposed development.

- 7.6 Furthermore, in considering the visual interface between the settlements, there is no inter-visibility between Stubbington at the site of the proposed development and Titchfield. As such, there is no location at which the gap appears to be visually reduced as a result of the development.
- 7.7 Indeed, the proposals do not extend the western-most or northern-most extents of Stubbington or reduce the physical width of the land between Stubbington and Titchfield. It is considered that the development would not 'adversely affect the 'landscape character, appearance and function' of the countryside, or erode the special qualities and characteristics of the Meon Valley.
- 7.8 The proposed development has retained an undeveloped zone along the western edge of the site in the form of an extension to the nature reserve. This undeveloped zone combined with the screening provided by proposed planting within the site will further limit the visibility of the built development, creating an appropriate area of transition and separation between the site and the Meon Valley to 'mitigate the effects of intrusive development', while protecting and enhancing the 'important landscape and ecological resources of the river corridor' as described in the adopted landscape character assessment. There would still remain clear separation and distinction between the urban areas of Stubbington and Titchfield.
- 7.9 The proposed development is visually separated from the sensitive valley floor by existing vegetation, the extended Nature Reserve and the proposed new planting within the masterplan.
- 7.10 It is noted that FBC have accepted the principle of significant new development within the Strategic Gap and Countryside elsewhere in the Borough through the proposed

allocation of development on sites within these designations. For example, Daedalus is within the Strategic Gap and was formally designated as Countryside. However, in the draft Local Plan it is designated for employment development. It is noteworthy that proposed development at Daedalus will reduce the gap between built development to just 285m (approximately) whereas the gap between Titchfield and the edge of land west of Old Street is over 2,000m.

- 7.11 Allocation H10 (Funtley Road South, Funtley) in the draft Local Plan is proposed on land designated as Countryside within the adopted Local Plan. This site is on rising land and will be visually prominent in publicly accessible views from Funtley Road. However, FBC have considered the principle of development in this Countryside location to be acceptable provided a number of requirements are met including *'Proposals shall take account of the site's landscape context by incorporating view corridors from Funtley Road through to the public open space allocation to the south of the residential allocation'*. This principle of incorporating view corridors to open space / countryside beyond is the same as that proposed as part of the application at Old Street.

## 8.0 EV40: Fareham Landscape Assessment

8.1 A landscape character assessment for Fareham Borough was undertaken and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in May 1996. In 2017 the report was reviewed and updated with some minor refinement of landscape character area boundaries, but the landscape types and character areas remained largely unchanged. The character area descriptions were updated in relation to the Meon Valley. The consultation draft of the Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017) is document EV40 of the emerging Local Plan Evidence Base.

8.2 An outline planning application for the development of up to 160 dwellings and open space on land at Old Street, Stubbington has recently been submitted to Fareham Borough Council. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVApp) has been undertaken and is submitted as a supporting document for the planning application. The LVApp was prepared in accordance with current best practice included within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)<sup>1</sup>. Whilst acknowledging that this site-specific assessment considers the specific landscape and visual amenity of the site in more detail than is possible within the borough wide Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017), there are some notable differences in our assessment of the site and its landscape context as discussed below.

### Coalescence

8.3 In consideration of the setting of the urban areas of Titchfield and Stubbington, the Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017) describes area 6.1 as having a '*crucial role in defining the natural limits to growth of settlements to the north and east, preventing further sprawl into open countryside to the west of Stubbington and south of Titchfield and Fareham and the potential coalescence of these settlements.*' This is a generalisation because the whole of area 6.1 is not essential to prevent either physical or visual coalescence; the terms of which are defined within the Fareham Borough Gap Review (2012).

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in 2013 (GLVIA3)

- 8.4 Indeed, within the Fareham Landscape Assessment it is conceded that *'physical coalescence of built form could in theory be prevented by a narrower corridor of landscape along the valley (e.g. the valley floor itself), any significant encroachment of development within the adjoining valley side... would potentially blur the clear distinction between 'town and country' along the settlement edges and adversely affect the quality of their natural, rural settings.'* Whilst accepting that both the valley floor and valley side slopes are important to prevent coalescence, area 6.1 includes farmland beyond this valley side slope, not all of which is essential to prevent physical or visual coalescence. The Fareham Borough Gap Review (2012) confirms that *'in defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation'.*
- 8.5 There is a related point within the Fareham Landscape Assessment regarding the need to *'Avoid encroachment beyond the existing urban edges of Stubbington and Titchfield and along the Titchfield Road corridor, especially where this may erode the physical or perceived gap between settlements or intrude upon the unspoilt, rural character and high quality of the landscape settings of these urban areas'.* This is contradictory to the comment referred to above but it is also not based on a logical analysis of how the gap is perceived, as per the discussion above regarding Policy SP6.

### **Landscape Value**

- 8.6 In relation to landscape value the Fareham Landscape Assessment concludes that character area 6.1 is *'of high overall sensitivity, particularly in respect of the character and quality of the landscape resource, the abundance of 'valued landscape' and 'its role in containing the outward sprawl of urban development from the north and east and its significant contribution to green infrastructure'.*
- 8.7 Further clarification is required where the phrase 'valued landscape' is used in order to avoid any confusion about the specific meaning. Where an assessment of the range of criteria listed in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 (page 84) or equivalent has not been carried out then such a judgement is overly ambiguous. The Appeal judgements on this topic justify the need for further clarity when the phrase 'valued landscape' is used rather than landscape

value <sup>2,3</sup>. We would argue based on our assessment that the site is not part of a 'valued landscape' as interpreted in Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### **Differences between Fareham Borough Character Assessment (1996) and Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017)**

- 8.8 There has been some significant development across the Borough of Fareham over the 21 year period since the Fareham Borough Character Assessment (1996) was prepared. Within the 1996 study the Meon Valley (Area 6) summary description identifies detractors to landscape character; *'a mosaic of open farmland (part of the wider coastal plain farmland), minor wooded valleys and smaller, enclosed pastures bordering the valley to the south of Titchfield, the latter helping to buffer the intrusion of adjacent urban development and fringe farmland to the east on the setting of Titchfield Haven'*. It goes on to describe the central section of the valley as having *'some damage to the integrity of the valley form and a more suburban character'*.
- 8.9 In contrast, the Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017) does not acknowledge existing detractors to landscape character to the same degree. It states that *'The eastern side of the valley (area 6.1c) is potentially the area most vulnerable to the threat of further development' including the 'westward expansion of Stubbington'. 'Within the southern part of area 6.1c, the belt of unspoilt, rural farmland provides a clear distinction between the urban area of Stubbington (which is contained behind a relatively strong boundary along Cuckoo Lane and Old Street) and the open countryside of the Meon Valley and wider coastal plain to the west.'*
- 8.10 The notable difference here is that there was *'some damage to the integrity of the valley', 'intrusion of adjacent urban development'* and *'a more suburban character'* to the central section of the valley identified in 1996, whereas within the 2017 assessment the same landscape is described as being *'a rural, intact landscape', with 'natural and unspoilt qualities'* and *'unspoilt character'*. The 2017 assessment does not acknowledge to the

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<sup>2</sup> Mr Justice Ouseley's High Court judgement on Stroud DC v Gladman case in the Cotswolds (reference CO/4082/2014)

<sup>3</sup> Radford Semele (reference APP/T3725/A/14/2222868, 2015)



same degree the variety in character and landscape quality that exist across the character area 6.1. Without a full understanding of the existing condition of this landscape, the benefits of landscape and green infrastructure enhancement relating to sensitively designed and considered development would be unnecessarily hard to justify.

### **Visual amenity**

- 8.11 The Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017) confirms that *'Views from outside the area to the north and east (including built areas in... Stubbington) are generally screened by vegetation or built form. Views into the area from the wider countryside areas of the coastal plain to the west are also largely limited by intervening vegetation along field boundaries and roadsides.'* This is largely consistent with our assessment supported by a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis which has been submitted with the Landscape and Visual Appraisal for the outline planning application.
- 8.12 Without the necessary justification or explanation the Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017) contradicts this stance by stating that *'Despite its visual containment from wider views, visual sensitivity is therefore relatively high across much of the valley landscape and there is consequently very limited potential for development without significant detrimental effects on the character and quality of local views from the local access network.'* Our assessment of the effects on visual amenity resulting from the proposed development do not support this position due to the limited opportunities for publicly available views of the site from public footpaths within the Meon Valley and the small magnitude of change that would occur within those views as a result of the proposed development.
- 8.13 In conclusion, we confirm that we are objecting to the Fareham Landscape Assessment (2017) for the reasons outlined above, which relate to coalescence, landscape value, inconsistencies with the 1996 Fareham Borough Character Assessment and visual amenity.



## **Appendices**



## **Appendix 1**

### Illustrative Masterplan





**NOTES**  
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REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHK'D
A	Internal client amendments	28.08.17	TB	-
B	Amendments post pre app comments	07.11.17	TB	-
C	Amendments to annotations	13.11.17	TB	-
D	Redline Amendment	22.11.17	TB	-

- KEY**
- Residential Built Form
  - Existing Trees
  - Existing Hedgerows
  - Proposed Trees
  - Ponds
  - Ecology Area
  - Public Open Space
  - Shared Surface
  - Private Drives/ Courtyards
  - Key Pedestrian Links
  - Private Access into Nature Reserve
  - Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve



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The Pavilion, Botleigh Grange Office Campus, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 2AF  
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**PROJECT**  
Land at Old Street  
Stubbington  
For: Bargate Homes

**DRAWING**  
Illustrative Masterplan

SCALE	DATE	AUTHOR	CHK'D
1:1000 @ A1	24.08.17	TB	-
JOB NO.	DRAWING NO.	REV	
A095937	IMP-01	D	





## **Appendix 2**

Letter from Natural England dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017

Date: 31 August 2017  
Our ref: 215331  
Your ref: 116 Old Street, Stubbington, Fareham



Paul Thomas  
Bargate Homes Limited

Customer Services  
Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

0300 060 3900

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Paul,

**Development proposal and location:** Old Street, Stubbington, Fareham

Bargate Homes Ltd has asked Natural England to confirm advice following a meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

During the meeting, it was discussed that the Old Street site does not currently support significant SPA qualifying species due to unfavourable management. However, the site represents significant potential due to its locality immediately adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and the existing diversity of species present on-site and in the adjacent area.

In order for any development at the site to meet the challenging requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraphs 7, 109 and 118) to conserve and enhance biodiversity and ensure net biodiversity gain is achieved, this significant potential needs to be recognised and enhanced through appropriate management.

The challenge of achieving biodiversity net gain at the site could be addressed by the open space on site forming an extension to the nature reserve rather than just a buffer between the reserve and development. The open space should be designed to be of a suitable size to create habitats to support and enhance the species present within the nature reserve and should include measures such as scrape creation. The new area of nature reserve, along with agreed management funding, should be made available to the Hampshire Wildlife Trust, with the aim being to incorporate this area into the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve (NNR).

We agreed that the open space should be designed to maximise the ecological potential of the site rather than creating a minimum buffer between the designated site and the new housing. In addition, a footpath link from the existing NNR to the proposed extension should be included, and the proposed nature reserve area should be designed in consultation with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust.

It is agreed that consideration should be given to the soft boundary between the development and the extension to the nature reserve and how to maximise opportunities from the new development, for example through the use of hides, viewing platforms and screened footpaths etc. A further suggestion to enhance the new residents' experience of the adjacent nature reserve and help mitigate the costs associated with managing increased visitor pressure on the NNR, is for Bargate Homes to provide new residents with the option for 1 year's free family membership to the Hampshire Wildlife Trust (HWT), who manage the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve. It is suggested that funding sufficient for family memberships for all the new housing is provided to the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and the new owners are given the option of taking up the free membership when they purchase their property.

By adopting the approach to extend the nature reserve, and with the correct size, design and long-term management, it is our view that the proposals could conserve and enhance biodiversity at the site and the proposals could support the adjacent NNR, rather than representing any significant constraint.

For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact Rachel Jones on 07717 808691.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Jones  
Lead Advisor Solent  
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight