

# Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

## Respondent's Details

Name: Planning Clerk

Organisation (if applicable): Crookham Village Parish Council

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**1. SHLAA Section 3:** Do you support the methodology used? If not, please explain why.

The principle of tacking on small sites on greenfield land around the periphery of Fleet will result in dormitory enclaves of high-density housing remote from services and facilities with attendant social and sustainability issues.

**2. Should the SHLAA draw a clearer distinction between housing targets and housing supply in the different sub regions identified in the emerging South East Plan that fall within Hart?** (That part of Hart within the 'Western Corridor Blackwater Valley' Sub Region has been allocated 4,300 dwellings, that part within the 'Rest of Hampshire' Sub Region has been allocated 100 dwellings.)

Allocating numerous small sites around existing conurbations in western Fleet area precludes reaching a critical mass around which to generate sustainable communities with adequate infrastructure. Existing developments on the SW edge of Fleet already suffer from lack of community facilities and have little to offer adjacent additional developments. Further fragmented dormitory developments adjacent to these existing estates would add to social problems caused by lack of access to community facilities due to distance and paucity of public transport .

**3. SHLAA Section 6 Broad Locations:** Do you have any comments on the identification of Fleet town centre as a broad location (e.g. the defined area, the estimated capacity, whether it should be treated as a broad location)? [The CLG guidance defines broad locations as areas where housing development is considered feasible, such as a particular town centre, and will be encouraged, but where specific sites cannot as yet be identified. Additionally, guidance on SHLAAs published by the Planning Advisory Service<sup>1</sup> states that broad locations could include residential areas where existing or proposed planning policy actively encourages additional housing through infilling and redevelopment. ]

Moving HDC offices seems to be motivated more by cash flow issues within HDC than anything else. Similarly for the car parks. Proper analysis of the sustainability issues raised by moving HDC offices out of Fleet, including identification and appraisal of an alternative site and the costs of moving, should precede allocation of the HDC town centre site for housing.

**4. Please provide any other comments below regarding the Interim Avoidance Strategy.**

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Development Plan Document Preparation, PAS July 2008

**4. Section 6 Broad Locations:** Are there any other areas in Hart that should be identified as broad locations?

Areas adjacent to good railway and road links as well as local amenities should be given first priority. Winchfield Station and Odiham seem likely foci for further investigation before unsustainable sites around the edge of Church Crookham are considered for the LDF.

**5. SHLAA Section 7: Windfalls** Do you have any comments on the windfall allowance e.g. Is a windfall allowance appropriate? Is the estimate about right, too low or too high? Should an allowance be made for a longer period than 2022 – 2026? Is there a better approach that could be taken to calculating the windfall allowance?

A windfall allowance is justified, but future generations will not be impressed if too many urban back gardens are filled with housing.

**6. SHLAA Section 9: Candidate LDF sites outside existing settlements:**

Do you agree that candidate LDF sites should be restricted to sites around the six largest settlements of Fleet/Church Crookham/Elvetham Heath, Yateley, Blackwater, Hook, Hartley Witney and Odiham? If not, please explain why.

LDF sites must consider quality of life, access to community facilities, public transport, railway, hospitals, doctors etc as well as the raw housing target. It is also arguable that, given the need for example for 4-bedroom housing for teachers identified elsewhere, a raw count of house numbers is driving cramped high-density building in areas where, had the alternative of a bedroom count been applied, building targets could be more-evenly distributed between smaller and larger dwellings.

**7. Please add any other comments in the box overleaf.**

This questionnaire can be returned by email to [planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk) or by post to:

Planning Policy, Planning Services  
Hart District Council  
Civic Offices  
Harlington Way  
Fleet  
GU51 4AE

**Representations should be returned by 5.00pm Monday 6 July 2009**

**7. Any other comments**

Crookham Village Parish Council recently circulated a questionnaire to all parishioners in preparation for production of a Parish Plan.

Responses to two relevant questions were as follows:

**55% want no further major development.**

The remainder would accept rural exception schemes for local people; small scale development in 'appropriate locations', particularly for affordable dwellings for young and single people; light industry, shops and services especially a doctors' surgery.

**Most want to retain the existing rural environment with open spaces between developments.**

95% of respondents want the village to 'stay as it is', as a working community.

Crookham Village Parish Council called a public meeting to consider the SHLAA proposals. Something over 140 persons attended - a record for any such meeting by a large margin. Of the many speakers, none was supportive of any of the adjacent SHLAA sites and their views have been taken into account in generating this response.

Lack of school places drew significant criticism. It is essential that, wherever the extra housing is built, there are adequate school places with associated public transport links and that health and other infrastructure is also provided in a timely fashion.

Roads around western Fleet are already at capacity and there is little scope for significant upgrades to existing routes. Lack of adequate roads is another reason why the western Fleet area is most unsuitable for yet more development.

Detailed environmental assessments must precede any final consideration of greenfield sites for inclusion in the LDF.

It would seem likely that the sustainability criteria of PPS7 are not met by any of the sites referred to below.

CVPC comments on individual sites in and adjacent to the Parish are as follows:

**GROVE FARM (SHL40)**

CVPC questions the sustainability of housing on this isolated site, which would be remote from shops, public transport and too small to have its own community facilities. The extra traffic onto Hitches Lane would be a serious challenge to the already-overloaded local road network at peak hours.

Due to the site contours, the visual effect of this site, especially at night, would be to close the visual gap between Crookham Village and the urban area of Fleet to the North, a gap which is crucial to retaining the character of Crookham Village and its Conservation Area.

There are no community facilities on Netherhouse Moor estate to which residents of SHL40 might gain access. SHL40 would therefore be very isolated socially unless a significant area suggested for housing is re-allocated to community facilities.

This site includes 14 species of birds on the UK BAP Priority List which breed in the area and a further 9 species that have occurred. This is exceptional and includes breeding populations of district importance eg 15+ pairs of skylark, 10 pairs of yellowhammer, 3 pairs of reed bunting and 1-2 pairs of northern lapwing. Development of Grove farm would destroy the core of this population

The site is also important for rare and declining cornfield annual plant communities that like dry, acid soils including corn marigold, bugloss, corn spurry, wild pansy, storksbill and poppy with sheep's sorrel on the field fringe.

The SHLAA claims a bus stop 210m away, but fails to discuss the usefulness (or rather the lack of it) of the available bus service to those who might live in this isolated location.

### **GROVE FARM (SHL40B)**

This possible SANG would serve to protect the gap between Crookham Village and Fleet and is broadly welcomed. If the whole of SHL 40, including the proposed area of housing, were allocated to SANG in perpetuity in support of other housing sites, the local population would likely be very supportive. The downside would be that the additional human presence would have an adverse effect on the current populations of seed-eating birds that require cultivation - eg skylarks, yellowhammer, linnet and lapwing.

### **LAND AT WATERY LANE, CHURCH CROOKHAM (SHL46)**

This greenfield site includes part of Redfields Rows SINC, which implies that a full ecological assessment must precede any moves to include this site in the LDF.

This is another unsustainable site isolated from facilities and with very limited public transport. The site would be accessed from Redfields Lane, which is already at capacity at peak times.

There is no cycle route to the North from Watery Lane except into the Zebon Copse estate road network. There are already issues with antisocial behaviour from youngsters transiting ZC Estate during the hours of darkness and development on this site would seem very likely to add to these unpleasant law and order issues.

The adjacent stream feeds into the River Hart and thence into the Loddon Catchment, not the Canal, and is the major drainage stream for QEB, Zebon Copse and adjacent industrial sites. This stream is already at capacity and flooding affects properties in Zebon Copse Estate, Zephon Common Lane and Crondall Road during times of peak flow. Further runoff from SHLAA sites would be unacceptable without very major works downstream.

Again, contrary to the SHLAA, Meadow View Cottage and Velmead Farm House, both listed Grade II, are adjacent to the site.

Eight species of bird featured on the UK BAP Priority list breed within or close to SHL46. These include lesser spotted woodpecker, marsh tit, spotted flycatcher, song thrush, bullfinch (only pair in the parish) and linnet. Further development would threaten these populations. Other rare species include 3 types of orchid, silver washed fritillary and white admiral butterflies, and pepper saxifrage in the meadowland. The surrounding woodlands are all highly sensitive ancient woodland with up to 18 indicator species. This valuable location enjoyed by so many local people would be lost should SHL46 be developed.

### **DACHS COPSE, CHURCH CROOKHAM (SHL36)**

This is another unsustainable greenfield site that is isolated from facilities and public transport and which feeds onto a local road, Redfields Lane, which is already at capacity at peak times. When considered in conjunction with SHL46 for both road geometry and traffic, the overall adverse effect on peak traffic flows would be considerable.

Contrary to the assertion in the SHLAA, there is no bus station in the local area – only distant bus stops.