

Hook Parish Council DRAFT

Formal Response to the draft Hart Local Plan 2011-2032

Regulation 18 Consultation –April 2017

Housing Numbers in Hook

The draft Plan suggests that only 87 more houses are to be provided in Hook Village on Greenfield sites (Clause 222) and the Neighbourhood Plan has to identify where these houses are to be allocated.

However, the draft plan makes no mention of the houses that are currently committed and yet to be built on Greenfield sites (680 number on 3 sites) or are the subject of current applications on Brownfield sites (462 number dwellings on 5 sites) or are the subject of current applications to convert offices (718 number dwellings on 6 sites and potential for even more). This would represent a 60% increase in housing numbers in Hook, before any further allocation in the draft LP or any site(s) being promoted and won on appeal due to the absence of an adopted LP.

The office conversions on Bartley Wood Business Park are generally of a poor standard and a concentration of over 700 units in an area of Hook Village that has poor pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the centre of Hook is not consistent with accepted principles of sustainability. This is contrary to the statement in the draft LP that Good Quality Housing is a fundamental need in Hart (Clause 92, 77/Vision/73).

Also, currently there is a planning application in progress for up to 750 dwellings on the land West of Hook (referred to in the draft Local Plan as Owens Farm but only suggesting 540 dwellings). This proposal includes a primary school, 5 retail units, GP unit and car parking in a new 'village centre'. This would promote a further degradation of retail and community activity in the centre of Hook at a time when the Neighbourhood Plan is trying to regenerate the Hook Centre. This Urban Extension is noted in Options 1 and 4 of the Interim SA Report, accompanying the draft LP, and rightly it notes that there are very significant transport constraints to overcome if this development is to be satisfactorily mitigated so that a Planning Permission could be reasonably granted.

It should be noted that this proposed site at Owens Farm is currently shown as a 'gap' between the settlement of Hook and Newnham in the draft LP (Figure 5 The Spatial Strategy) – the inference being that this area is not ear-marked for development since it serves as a buffer to coalescence.

The requirement for another 87 houses on Greenfield sites must be removed as there is already a question over whether the current planned developments are sustainable without significant improvements in the Infrastructure.

Protection against further provision of poor quality dwellings in Bartley Wood Business Park where the infrastructure is also poor must be provided in order to avoid a 'slum' area of Hook.

A Policy for Hook where competing retail and other village centre facilities must not be provided in any housing or mixed use developments within the Parish must be provided in order to protect the integrity and commercial success of the existing Village Centre.

New Settlement at Murrell Green

The residents of Hart District, including those of Hook, voted in the Refined Options for New Homes consultation, in March 2016, overwhelmingly for Approach 3 which was for a new settlement at Winchfield. Therefore, the proposal for a substantial New Settlement at Murrell Green (Policy SC2) has not been welcomed especially as it is described in the draft LP as "creating a new vibrant neighbourhood around a strong village centre - becoming a destination in itself." Again in view of the fact that this new 'village' will be substantially within the existing Hook Parish then it will inevitably compete with Hook for retail and other community uses. Indeed, the draft LP in Clause 313 actually states that, "additional shops, financial and professional services, restaurants etc. are required in Hook" but then suggests that this need could be met at Murrell Green which is positively detracting from the need and aim of the Neighbourhood Plan to regenerate the centre of Hook.

There is mention of "improved links to the Railway Station at Winchfield" (Clause 188) but there is no safe and commodious pedestrian or cycle route to this transport hub and the distances involved will result in commuters inevitably using private cars to access the Station from any residential properties provided at Murrell Green.

The draft LP states that the details of the new settlements design and layout will be worked up in consultation with the local community (Clause 189), but there is no existing community at Murrell Green, with the exception of a few outlying farms/dwellings.

Para 116 states "Based on current judgements, Murrell Green (up to 1,800 new homes) is the most favoured option (see Policy SC2). It is deliverable and considered the most suited to meeting the housing needs of the District within the plan period." The LP should point to evidence that supports this or at least show how the decision was arrived at.

Options that were not included in the 2016 public consultation should not be included in the draft Local Plan. A new mixed use Village within the Parish of Hook is not appropriate and must be removed from the Local Plan as it would seriously detract from the

commercial viability of Hook Centre and the existing village of Hook would experience a steady decline.

Lack of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan

There has not been any strategic transport modelling and assessment in regard to the significant number of new houses and other land uses proposed in this draft LP so it is not at all clear whether the road network will be able to accommodate the growth in vehicle trips in Hook. This is of special concern having regard to the 1860 dwellings (as in the Housing Numbers section above) that are already due to arrive in Hook before any further development suggested by the draft LP comes forward.

There is no strategy or policies in the draft LP in regard to the provision of facilities in Hook to promote sustainable modes of travel, especially improved pedestrian and cycle routes that are safe and convenient.

Policy BE1 is not a sound policy in regard to car parking provision and does not address the serious car parking issues that are experienced throughout Hook.

It is well known that there are serious sewerage capacity issues in Hook and the draft LP provides no confidence that the sewer network will be enhanced in a timely manner to accommodate the expected high level of growth in the next few years.

Hook Parish Council is very concerned that there is no draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan published alongside the draft LP and there is no opportunity to provide comments on any such plan at this time.

Employment Sites in Hook

The draft LP identifies 3 Strategic Employment sites in Hook (Bartley Wood Business Park, Bartley point and Osborne Way) and that these are to be “protected for Class B uses and as such the loss of these sites to alternative uses will not be acceptable” (Clause 273).

However, the District Council have made no attempt to prevent almost all of the offices on Bartley Wood Business Park being converted to poor quality residential units (718 dwellings identified to date and potential for more to come forward as this is a very profitable exercise for investment companies). This is despite Hook Parish Council making strong representations to Hart DC to apply to the SoS to apply an Article 4 Direction, in accord with the National Planning Policy Framework criteria, on this Business Estate to prevent investors making quick profit on conversions without marketing the sites as offices or providing quality housing on these sites.

The draft LP identifies the site currently occupied by Rawlings Haulage as a “Locally Important Employment Site” however, this fails to recognise that this haulage business has outgrown this site and is seeking to relocate to Murrell Green. This proposed relocation is

fully supported by Hook Parish Council as it would retain this employment use in Hook and Murrell Green is well connected to the strategic road network. The removal of 40 plus HGV vehicles from the Centre of Hook would be very beneficial in environmental terms and the Brownfield site is currently proposed for new retail and housing land uses that would complement the Hook Village Centre.

The Rawlings site was not designated as a Locally Important Employment Site when Hook Parish Council were bringing forward new residential developments at Pembroke Manor (formerly Landata House) and Bartley House. Such a designation would sever these two important residential developments from the centre of Hook Hence, Hook Parish Council request that this new designation for the Rawlings Haulage site is rescinded.

Hook Parish Council would wish a site to be allocated in the Local Plan as an extension to the existing business park at Murrell Green which would be designed suitably for use by Rawlings Haulage thus retaining this valued employer in Hook Parish and freeing up the existing Rawlings Haulage site for mixed use development more appropriate for Hook Centre location.

Planning Policies

The draft LP places much emphasis and reliance on the Neighbourhood Plan for delivery of Policies and a Development Framework for Hook Village (Clauses 12, 15, 136,311-313) but Hart DC have provided very little support to the Hook Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering group is comprised of volunteers from the village and has no person having any Town Planning qualifications or experience. Hence, the Steering Group foundered for several years and is only now making progress due to recently successfully obtaining technical assistance from Locality/DCLG.

There have been no plans or policies put forward by the draft LP to assist Hook Centre to grow and develop in a sustainable manner in order to accommodate the expected doubling in population over the Plan Period. The draft LP variously identifies Hook Village as a district centre, larger village, smaller district centre, key local centre and brownfield urban area. So there is an identity crisis for Hook within Hart District and there are no LP Policies to support and to encourage the major regeneration that is badly needed in Hook.

The draft Local Plan does not show the existing community around Winchfield Railway Station (figure 5 The Spatial Strategy) and this is considered to be seriously misleading as to promote a new settlement based around this mainline railway station would make infinitely more sense that to try and establish a residential settlement at the more remote Murrell Green area.