

Note of advisory meeting with Gosport Borough Council, 30 Jan 2014

Present: Linda Edwards (Deputy Chief Exec); Chris Payne, Jayson Grygiel (Planning Policy team)

The Council has prepared a Pre-Submission Local Plan which it had hoped to submit for examination in about May 2014. However, because a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) has just been published (end of January 2014), plan submission could be delayed. The Council sought the advisory meeting to discuss (i) the duty to co-operate and (ii) housing supply issues. From reading the draft plan, it is clear that these are challenging issues for Gosport.

Gosport has prepared its plan on the basis of meeting housing figures which are consistent with the informal sub-regional plan, South Hampshire Strategy 2012, prepared by all the PUSH authorities. This identified a need for 55,600 new homes 2011-26 whereas the new SHMA, carried out by GL Hearn & Partners and based closely on good practice in accordance with the NPPG, recommended a target of 62,400 with additional homes beyond 2026 to 2029. Gosport BC, and the G L Hearn report, suggest that it could take 2 years to revise the South Hampshire Strategy in the light of the new housing need evidence. The Council wishes to submit its Local Plan sooner than that.

Gosport has a good record of housebuilding, having regularly exceeded earlier housing targets in recent years. However, the area is heavily constrained: limited land area with sea on 3 sides; MOD currently owns 21% of land in the Borough and the release of MOD land is a major determinant of housing land supply; significant areas of land within flood zone 3; internationally significant habitats and SSIs are present; retention of employment sites is important to restrict high levels of outward commuting and traffic congestion from the peninsula.

Neighbours – Portsmouth and Fareham - have plans adopted in 2011 with housing figures which arguably should be raised to meet the revised SHMA numbers. A development site north of Fareham, at Welborne, is already planned in Fareham CS to accommodate a new community with 6,500 new homes to meet sub-regional housing needs.

There is a good, established record of co-operation in the locality because of PUSH, and Gosport did not anticipate opposition from its neighbours when draft its Pre-Submission Plan. However, this may change now that the results of the updated SHMA are available. In order to satisfy the duty to co-operate and meet the objectively assessed need for housing in the HMA, the following possible lines of action were discussed:

- Securing a memorandum of agreement with neighbouring LPAs and other prescribed bodies as to how the necessary uplift of housing is to be achieved;
- Revisiting the SHLAA and other housing supply evidence to ensure that Gosport is promoting every possible opportunity for meeting

higher housing figures (if spread evenly across the HMA, a roughly 10% increase is needed), especially in the short term;

- Ensuring that the evidence related to constraints on the supply of new housing sites in Gosport is very rigorous and robust;
- Considering with neighbouring LPAs the scope to enlarge the allocation at Welborne, which had earlier been considered as suitable for 10,000 new homes;
- Committing to an early review of the Local Plan to take on board an updated South Hampshire Strategy which would reflect the new SHMA evidence.

I encouraged an early submission of a Local Plan, providing neighbours will not be opposing it on duty to co-operate grounds or be critical of its housing targets; and providing the NPPF para 47 is properly addressed. Early submission, even if an early review is needed, would be more consistent with national policy than holding back for 2 years waiting for PUSH to complete further planning, and would make more effective use of resources and work carried out so far.

Gosport is progressing its CIL schedule and hopes to submit a charging schedule simultaneously with its Local Plan for examination.

Jill Kingaby
(Inspector)