

# **Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029**

## **Statement on Issues and Questions**

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### **Issue**

In light of the acknowledged constraint on housing sites, should the Council have carried out a Strategic Gap Review?

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015

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**GOSPORT**  
Borough Council

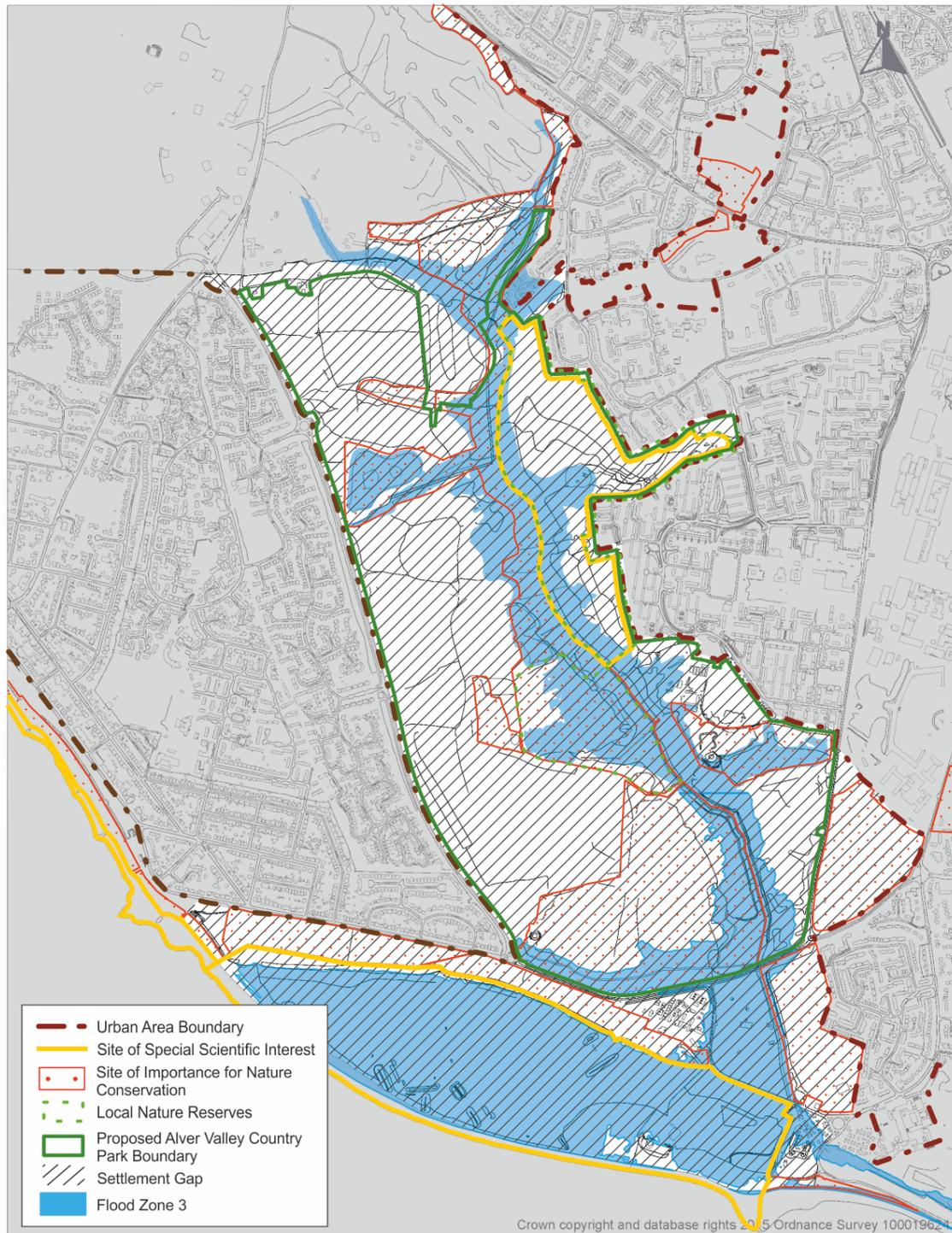
## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 For clarification purposes ‘strategic gaps’ are referred to as a ‘settlement gap’ in the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (GBLP) (Submission Library-LP/A1/1). Policy LP3 (point 10) of the GBLP identifies a settlement gap between Gosport/Fareham and Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent and is shown on the Policies Map (LP/A1/1/1). The Policy aims to protect the character and function of this gap and ensure that the identity of each settlement is protected and that proposals do not physically and visually diminish these open areas.
- 1.2 This settlement gap is considered of sub-regional importance and is identified in the PUSH South Hampshire Strategy (2012) (LP/D1/1). Policy 15 of the South Hampshire Strategy identifies the four key gaps in South Hampshire and the criteria for the local authorities to define the boundaries of all the gaps. This includes:
- the designation is needed to retain the open nature and/or sense of separation between settlements; and
  - the land to be included in the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence.
- 1.3 It adds that the gap’s boundaries should not preclude provision being made for the development proposed in the Strategy and that the gap should include no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.
- 1.4 The Strategy recognises that gaps have formed a key element in the strategic planning of the sub-region for a number of years. More recently in 2008, the PUSH Joint Committee adopted a Policy Framework (LP/D3/1) which sets out criteria for the designation of gaps in order to ensure consistency across South Hampshire. It acknowledges gaps which cross authority boundaries, such as the Gosport/Fareham and Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent Gap, need a coordinated approach to ensure that their designation and their extent is aligned across the boundary.

## **2 The land uses and environmental constraints in the settlement gap**

- 2.1 The settlement gap in Gosport Borough is limited to an area of land between Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent. Plan 1 shows the location of the settlement gap within the Borough together with key environmental considerations relating to nature conservation and flood risk. The gap is largely made up of the following components:
- The Alver Valley Country Park;
  - Lee-on-the-Solent Golf Course;
  - Browndown Site of Special Scientific Interest;
  - The far western end of Stokes Bay including No. 2 Battery and car park;
  - Browndown Camp;
  - Kingfisher Caravan Park and a residential caravan park; and
  - Two major sports field sites on the eastern edge of the settlement gap.

## Plan 1: Location of the settlement gap within Gosport Borough and key environmental considerations



2.2 Taken together the various uses provide a clear and defensible gap between the two settlements, within one of the most densely urbanised districts in the South East of England region (7<sup>th</sup> highest population density)<sup>1</sup>. This gap protects the separate identities of Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent and forms part of a wider gap within

<sup>1</sup> After Portsmouth, Southampton, Slough, Reading, Oxford and Brighton & Hove (based on 2011 Census)

Fareham Borough which prevents further coalescence between the settlements of Fareham and Stubbington. In accordance with wider planning objectives the space is multi-functional and creates a pleasant and necessary space available for recreation including a Country Park, sports fields, a caravan park and nationally important habitats (at Browndown and the Wildgrounds within the Alver Valley).

- 2.3 The creation of the Alver Valley Country Park is a key objective of the Council and Policy LP8 of the GBLP is applicable. Further details are set out in the Alver Valley Country Park Strategy (LP/F1/1).
- 2.4 Key policies relating to other key land use policies and environmental constraints include:
- Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (LP42);
  - Two local nature reserves (LP43);
  - Numerous Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)(LP43);
  - Large tracts of land within Floodzone 3 (LP45);
  - Existing tourism accommodation (LP18);
  - Existing residential caravans or park homes site (LP25);
  - Existing open space (LP35).

### **3 The boundary of the settlement gap**

- 3.1 The local boundaries as defined on the Policies Map have been defined in cooperation with Fareham Borough Council to reflect the cross boundary extent of the gap. This included a Fareham Borough Council-led review of its boundaries whereby a Gosport Borough Council planning officer met with colleagues from Fareham Borough and their consultants to ensure a common approach across the boundary. An extract of this report is included in Appendix 1<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.2 As part of the process of preparing the GBLP the Council did consider the boundary of the urban area boundary. By its definition this included a review of the urban area boundary adjacent the settlement gap and therefore the boundary of the gap itself. Further details are set out in the Urban Area Boundary Background Paper (LP/E1/12). This review did lead to a number of changes to the urban area boundary including some changes relating the settlement gap itself (see paragraphs 3.6-3.8 below).
- 3.3 In addition the Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2014) (SHLAA) (LP/E7/1) assessed broad areas within the settlement gap and other areas outside of the urban area boundary to ascertain whether there are suitable, available and achievable sites that could provide additional residential development in the light of the acknowledged constraints on housing sites (see Table 5 (p20-23) and Appendix 3 (p86) of SHLAA).

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<sup>2</sup> The full document can be viewed on Fareham Borough Council's website

<http://www.fareham.gov.uk/pdf/planning/gapreviewstudyreport.pdf>

see following for appendices: [http://www.fareham.gov.uk/planning/local\\_plan/natenvcoast.aspx](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/planning/local_plan/natenvcoast.aspx)

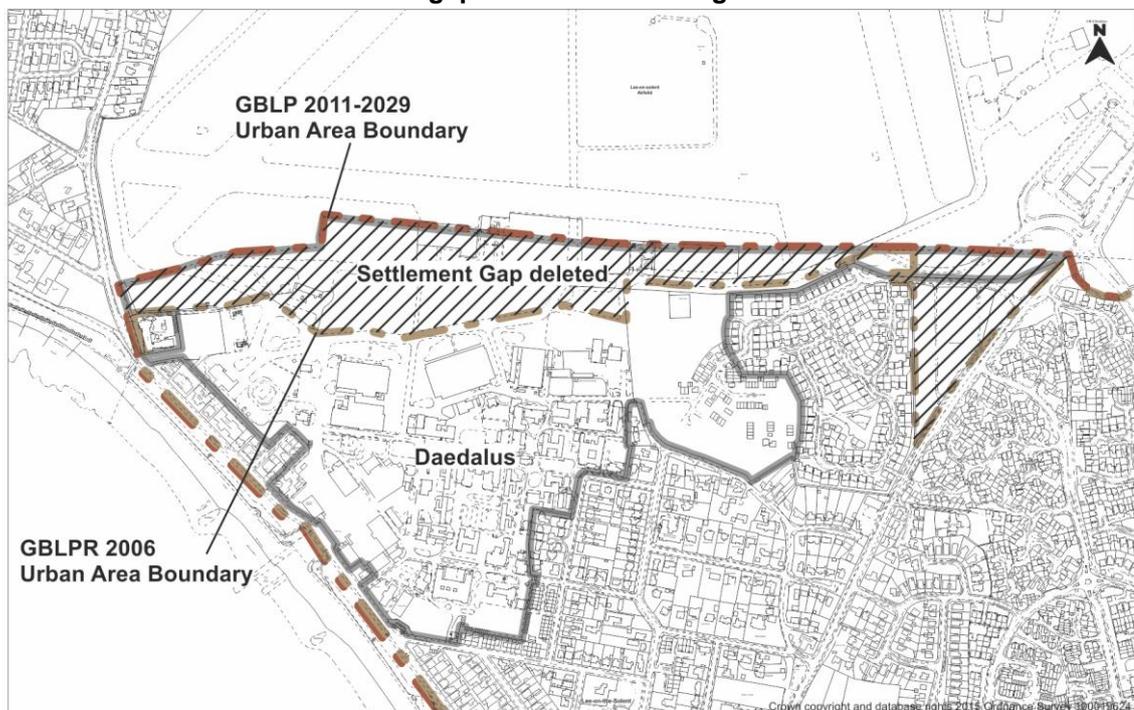
3.4 Individual sites outside of the urban area boundary were also considered as part of the SHLAA including Browndown Training Camp within the settlement gap (p60 of the SHLAA).

3.5 The key amendments to the settlement gap as part of the review are outlined below.

Area associated with the Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus

3.6 It is proposed to include an area on the northern edge of the Daedalus site (see Policy LP5 of the GBLP) within the urban area boundary. This is land between the mixed used allocation as shown on the 2006 Proposals Map (LP/A5/1a) and the Borough boundary. This area south of the airfield (see Plan 2) forms part of the built-up area of Daedalus within Gosport Borough both in terms of its function and visual characteristics. The change will provide greater certainty to developers wishing to proceed with planning applications in association with the Enterprise Zone.

**Plan 2: Review of the settlement gap at the northern edge of Lee-on-the-Solent**



Other areas associated with the northern boundary of Lee-on-the-Solent

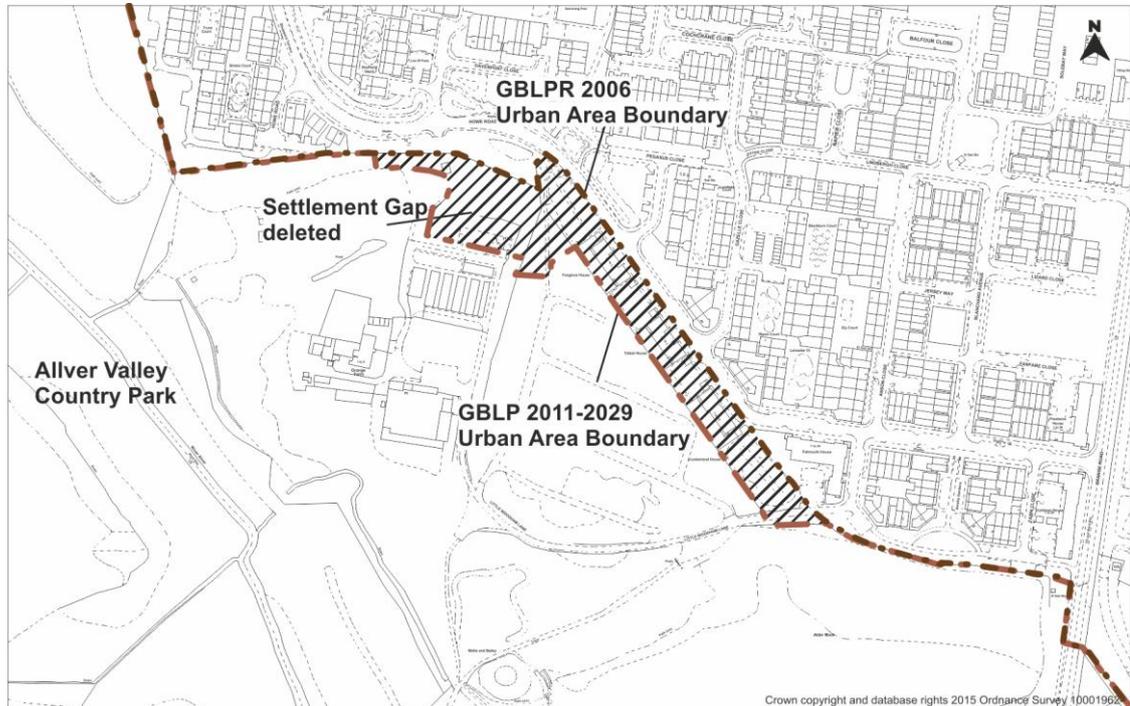
3.7 As part of this revision to the boundary at Daedalus it has been considered appropriate to also include the allotment land to the east and other small areas of adjoining land within the urban area (see Plan 2 above), particularly as the new main access road to Daedalus will provide a new urban edge to the Borough.

Amendments to boundary adjacent the Rowner Renewal (Alver Village) Development

3.8 Amendments have also been made in association with the major regeneration scheme associated with Alver Village (see Policy LP7 of the GBLP) (see Plan 3). This included a strip of land previously outside the urban area, within the settlement gap. This land will be developed for residential. It has been necessary to ensure in this instance that the amendment to the settlement gap does not detrimentally affect

the Council's objectives relating to the Alver Valley Country Park, particularly in relation to the proposed visitor hub at Grange Farm.

**Plan 3: Review of the settlement gap at Rowner (Alver Village area)**



**4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Council has undertaken a review of the settlement gap in the context of the PUSH policy set out in the South Hampshire Strategy (2012). Detailed consideration has been given to the settlement gap boundary and sites within the settlement gap through the review of the urban area boundary, the production of a SHLAA and cooperation with Fareham Borough Council.
- 4.2 As a result of this review, amendments have been made to the settlement gap in order to facilitate economic-led mixed used development at the Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus; and additional residential development as part of the major regeneration scheme at Alver Village (also known as the Rowner Renewal scheme).
- 4.3 Otherwise due to the key policy objectives of the settlement gap as well as various environmental constraints within the gap itself it is considered that the gap is appropriate as currently proposed on the Policies Map.

**9.4. Relationship with Neighbouring Authorities: Gosport**

Gosport are fully supportive of strategic gap policy and have tried to include as much open land as possible in the gap within Gosport Borough. The Alver Valley is vitally important to the gap especially the large open space area to the south and east of the Cherque Farm estate which is proposed as a country park. The area of recreation ground projecting into Fareham Borough on its eastern boundary is also classified as strategic gap, as well as the marginal green areas along the boundary with Fareham. The strategic gap boundary on the eastern side is therefore contiguous and logical across the local authority boundaries.

The south western boundary of the gap currently running along the southern border of HMS Daedalus, parallel to the East-West runway of the active airfield will be reassessed, in the light of the proposed enterprise zone. The Government designated the development areas within the airfield as an enterprise zone in August 2011. Gosport have identified the area within its Daedalus SPD as suitable for economic development and Fareham has identified the areas known as Hangars East and Hangars West as suitable for employment development in its adopted Core Strategy (2011). In March 2012 the councils resolved to grant outline planning permission for development within the enterprise zone areas.

The illustrative master-plan for HMS Daedalus outlines the potential redevelopment of the site, (see illustration 11) and retains open space associated with the runways and to the north and east of the site. The proposed development around the site may weaken the effectiveness of the gap in the longer term unless the identified open space and open vistas are retained across the site. Sensitive redevelopment of hangars east and west and the area within Gosport will be needed to prevent further coalescence across the gap.